Growing pressure of indebtedness, rising cost of cultivation, declining returns from agriculture, adverse impact of economic liberalisation, etc, are commonly identified as the main causes of agrarian distress in India. In addition global warming also increased the tension among Indian farmers as drought and flood is badly affected the agricultural sectors. Due to loss in agriculture, failed implementation of government agriculture policies and debt from private lender created socio-economic tension among farmers. One the one hand governments wash their hand on the issue of farmer suicide as they waved off lakh of crore farmer loan but the fact is that rate of suicide in India not reduced. To know the deteriorated situation of farmers, this book has covered the period before 1990s when liberalisation, privatisation and globalization were welcomed by the Indian government and the present crisis. As recently National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reveals that more than 10,500 farmers committed suicide in 2017. However, government is exultant because it's competitively low and declining compare to last few year. To know the ground level reason of farmer suicide in India this book has dissertate all aspect of social, political, and economic life of farmers.

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Agrarian Crisis and Farmer suicide in India: The Voice Unheard

S. Kumar

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Agrarian Crisis and Farmer Suicide in India

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Preface

The idea about to work on the topic of 'Farmers Suicide in India' did not come suddenly. From last one-decade farmers suicide news secured its permanent position in daily newspaper. The situation is rather to improve, getting worst day by day and year by year. We have noticed that the growing pressure of indebtedness, rising cost of cultivation, declining returns from agriculture, adverse impact of economic liberalisation, etc, are commonly identified causes of agrarian distress and farmers suicide in India. In recent, global warning also increased the tension among farmers as drought and flood badly affected the Indian agricultural sectors. Due to loss in agriculture every monsoon, and no proper implementation of agriculture policies, increasing debt from private lender created economic tension among farmers. In such situation the farmers have no option but to raise their voice against government or to commit suicide. It is clearly noticed that in last 20 years, large number of farmer's protest erupted against the government or case of suicide increased.

To know the deteriorated situation of farmers this book has compiled various chapters in this regard to cover all aspect of issues and challenges confronting by the farmers in their day-to-day lives. This book is divided into several parts, in which the first chapter has made ground level emphasis based on empirical data collected by the researcher in suicide affected villages in Purba Bardhaman District, West Bengal. This chapter deals with secret relations of intermediaries and the issues of indebtedness among Farmers. In his study he has briefly discussed how the profit in agriculture sector not only fall but they are under huge indebtedness. The chapter has described how the unethical practices growing though money lenders in the region. Prime focus of this study is to examines how the intermediaries unnecessarily entered the farmers' lives and after that, still playing a secret role to impose farmer lifelong indebtedness status which leads farmers to suicidal tendencies.

Second chapter has begun the description from the ancient time since the era of Indus valley civilization. This chapter covers most of the farmers movement in the colonial period against rise of land lease and how the huge taxes were imposed on agriculture. In the continuity of this work, much focused has been made on the techniques used in the Indian agriculture sector, how the Indian farmers were using old ages techniques which is not sufficient to cope with foreign competitors. Decline in the price of commodities and widening disparities between agriculture and non-agricultural sector, for all these reason on agrarian distress is linked with globalization. The major emphasis has been made to discuss such government policies and economic measures which was taken by the government to deal with this agrarian crisis. This paper has critically evaluated those policies and measures which begun the agrarian crisis in India.

There are enormous programme and policies were introduced by the government to combat farmers suicide in India. Regarding this view in mind the researcher in the third chapter has reexamine most of schemes, programmes, policies, strategies etc. with relate to farmers suicide in India. The chapter has made an understanding to know the hurdle in the implementation of programmes and schemes such as; Prime Minister Rehabilitation Package (PMRP), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA).

Fourth chapter has made to see the farmers suicide from a new approach, in this paper researches discussed the Marxist point of view, how capitalist development initially created euphoria, which resulted a massive agrarian crisis which further driving farmers to commit suicide. In this work researcher has included both international and regional perspective, how the India is abided with international human rights law but failed to protect the rights of their people. And how the long-term effect of globalisation and its impact on the subsidies affected the cost of production. This paper has also made an approach to highlight the sustainable growth benefits and how it can be refurbished through Panchayati Raj System.

The fifth chapter opens with a debate on farmers' suicide on statistics, epidemiology discussion from the theoretical perspectives of Durkheim's category of altruistic suicide. The paper has focused on Marginal Farmers and Suicide in Western Odisha, and how the role of traditions social norms failed to include in the stress management and obligations of kind members to each other including land. These obligations had a different legal regime than the present-day state intervened 'norms', privatization of resources and commons, and a sense of defeat has developed. The data of this work is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the researcher on popular discourse, and media representations. Including this has bring critical linkages of social-norms property and suicide of the small and marginal farmers.

Chapter six is about farmers representation in the world largest democracy, this work has described how the farmers demands were always compromised by the government due their lack of leadership role. This paper brings that how the farmers movement in India never gained political attention and failed to pressurize the government to think about farmers suicide issues. And how the farmers movement in contemporary era have very different nature and political aspirations compare to pre 1990s.

In the beginning of chapter seven, researcher has explained how the economic development and living standard in India is largely dependent on the productivity of agriculture sector. However, due to agrarian crisis farmers suicides increased in every part of the country. In this paper the researcher has compiled and analysed latest data on female farmers suicide cases from National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). This paper has found that in most of the cases female farmers were never considered as farmers instead, they were considered as the widows of the male farmers or as the helping hand of the family. This paper bring forth controversial debate over the definition and recognition of female farmers, as it is very clear that engagement of women is visible in farming activity but they are not categorised as farmers as ownership of the land usually held by men. Paper revealed the fact that the government has deprived the women farmers to claim such benefits introduced in the various policies which increases their

plight after the death of their husbands. The chapter is divided into four sections. Firstly, the chapter discusses the background of the agrarian crisis in general and farmer suicide discusses the trend of farmer suicide rate in the last decade. The second section discusses the plight of the female farmers in detail, the denial of their rights over the land, the non-recognition of their work and the sudden responsibilities they must deal with after their deceased husbands. The third section discusses the plight of women farmers from the Marxian perspective, and the fifth section provides the concluding remarks of the author. Importance of this research is very few research papers have pondered upon the plight of the female farmers. In this context, the this chapter examined the status of the women farmers in India and analysed the problems they face because of the non-recognition of their work. Using secondary sources, the chapter found that as the second sex women farmers are used as Marx's reserve army, and this leads to the troubles they have to face as dependent farmers of the family or the widows of a deceased farmer.

In the last chapter researcher has mostly focused on the farmers suicide cases due to indebtedness. He has begun his debate since the implementation of liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation in the Indian economy in 1990s. The research primarily focused, how the implementation of these economic reform policies badly affected the agriculture sector. The paper has covered many Indian states and catagorised the various reason for suicide due to indebtedness. The basic thrust of this chapter is to criticise the role of government on agrarian crisis, as the researcher found that not only government made the situation worse with the implementation of economic reform policies but also denied their role to provide subsidies in fertilizer, seeds, electricity, water, etc. This paper has widely covered how the farmer's situation deteriorated since 1990s to present time. This paper has mostly made to deal with both sociological and economical approach to know the reason for committing suicide.

Dr. Sumant Kumar

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CHAPTER 1

The Secret Relation of Intermediaries and Indebtedness in Farmers' Life: A Sociological Study of two Suicide Affected Villages in Purba Bardhaman District, West Bengal

Bapan Chakraborty

Abstracts

West Bengal is one of the states in India where still 70 percent of villagers are dependent on agricultural works. In recent, the growth of profit in agriculture fall down but still, the poor marginal farmers are depending on agricultural activity. Several soils related emotions bound them in a relationship. Due to the privatisation, Globalisation and corporate involvement in the agriculture sector, most of the small scale or marginal farmers are affected through the capital accumulation of big-scale farmers and lack of another modern technological utilisation. Throughout the procedure of cultivation 'boro and amon' rice farmers require an amount of money in several times for production. Eighty percent of the marginal farmers don't have enough cash, only the land is their fixed assets. Some money lenders or private Microfinance companies gave them money abiding all hidden conditions. As well as mortgage their land in an unethical manner. All we know that agriculture is one of the uncertain businesses because it purely depends on climate and weather. No one knows when the climate or weather can affect the cultivation or totally affect. Rather than we say that after investing

there has no positive chance to get back 100 percent return until the harvesting is complete. Some agents or representatives has been taken this chance as their business gateway. Firstly, they build the relationship and after getting reliance to provide or offer them an amount of a loan. At the time of EMI, payment farmers realised that hidden/unnecessary charges has imposed by a Finance company or moneylender. An intermediary or the agent creates a pressure after that month. The whole manner of pressure is systemised through this aspect.

This study is trying to examine how the intermediaries unnecessarily entered into the farmers' lives and after that, they play a secret role to impose farmer lifelong indebtedness status which leads farmers to suicidal tendencies. The data is based on a primary survey and an intense interview of 100 farmers at two villages in the Purba Bardhaman District of West Bengal. This study concludes with the results of how private Finance company agent cursing farmers' life for their profit. As well as State government takes an initiative to prevent suicides of farmers regarding their indebtedness. In this regards Government to support farmers to build their ability to realise the untold reality and overcome the indebtedness status. This present a study not only reveals the problems of a farmer's life but also an emphasis on the present government policies for preventing farmers' suicide due to any cause.

Keywords: Indebtedness, Intermediaries, Micro Finance, Corporate agriculture.

Introduction

West Bengal is one of the agriculture-dependent States in India. Most significantly more than eight percentages of total India's food is generated from West Bengal. Still, West Bengal is sustaining the best track record in rice production throughout India. As well as Bengal increased production level in jute, potato, vegetables, and other seasonal crops through the last two decades. 75 percent of rural economy depends on agriculture[1] rather

[1]Nandi D. and Siddhanta S. (2000) 'Trends in West Bengal Agriculture', *Encounter; Journal of Policy Research and Developmental Initiative,* Dec. 2000, P-101-119.

than we say 70 percent of rural villager's livelihood depends on agriculture.[2] After the green revolution and land reformed in India, several welfare schemes are introduced for providing a better status of farmer's life and livelihood. But behind the shadow, several deprivations are starving for the better condition of farmers. Political parties use this issue for gaining their vote bank. But last two decades no significant changes occur in the farmer's life due to the improper utilisation of farmers' welfare schemes. The growth of profit may fall but the poor marginal farmers and sharecropper are still depending on this occupation. Generation wise activities are still looked in several villages. Villagers think that soils emotion bound them in a relationship.

Due to the privatisation, globalisation and corporate agriculture, small scale or marginal farmers are affected through the capital accumulation of big-scale farmers and lack of another modern technological utilisation. The high price of several raw material and equipment decrease the profit level. It is a pathetic condition for small scale farmers. Throughout the procedure of cultivation '*boro* and *amon*'[3] rice farmers require an amount of money several times for production. 80 percent of the marginal farmers do not have enough cash on hand.[4] Only the land is their fixed assets. So, some money lender or private Microfinance company gives them money abiding all hidden conditions. As well as mortgage their land in an unethical manner. All we know that agriculture is one of the uncertain businesses because it purely depends on climate and weather. No one knows when the climate or weather can affect the cultivation or totally affect. Rather than we say that after investing there has no positive chance to get back 100 percent until the harvesting is complete.[5] Here several private insurance companies

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[2]Chand R, Srivastava S,K and Singh J.(2017) 'Changing Structure of Rural Economy of India Implications for Employment and Growth', National Institute for Transforming India, NITI Aayog,GOI,Nov 2017, p-1-26.

[3]*boro* and *amon*' is varieties of rice; *Amon*' grow from June to December and '*Boro*' in the summer or dry season.

[4]Shiva V. And Jalees K,(2009) 'Farmers Suicides in India, Research Foundation for Science, Tchnology and Ecology', The University of Michigan, Page-7, 43-44.

[5]Nandi et al. (1979) "Is suicide preventable by restricting the availability of lethal agents? A rural summary of West Bengal". *Indian Journal of Psychiatry.* 21, 251-55.

agents also come to force them for opening a policy. But after the bad condition arises, they betrayed farmers in the bases of showing several hidden grounds.

The agricultural history of West Bengal says that intermediaries are playing a significant role to vanish the surplus-value or profit of farmers. Intermediaries are buying the crop before the cultivation through a minimum marginal price. But in a crisis like situation, such as due to flood, drought and different diseases of a crop they gave up the hands of farmers. Without any investment or taking a risk they want back money from them. Some agents or representative has taken this chance as their business gateway. Firstly, they build a relationship and after getting reliance to provide or offer them an amount of a loan. At the time of EMI, submission farmers realised that hidden/unnecessary charges have imposed by a Finance company or moneylender. Farmers do not know to whom they can approach or complain. After that intermediary/agent creates pressure physically, legally and mentally on farmers. Indebtedness and deterioration of the financial condition is one of the significant reasons for farmer's suicide in India. But some family members or relatives unnecessarily introduce some cursing situation which implies the drastic scenario through sacrificing a farmer's life.

Statement of the Problem

Last two decades farmer's suicide was a burning issue at Indian socio-economic arenas. However, it is still growing concern for all policymakers and signifies as a social problem. Several reasons are behind this problem. West Bengal is one of the states where 70 percent of farmers are poor marginal's, sharecropper and small scale in nature. Purba Bardhaman District is known as a 'Dhaner Gola' (Rice Granary) of West Bengal. 65 percent of the villager's main occupation is cultivation[6]. Therefore, agriculture-related pathological condition frequently occurs in this district. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) implies

[6]Pal B.(2017) ' Crop Combination Region of Ausgram Panchayet in West Bengal, India', International Journal of Scientific Research and Management(IJSRM),Vol-5, P-6855-6858

several schemes for farmer's welfare. But the unfair distribution and deprivation are forcefully imposed by the different middlemen. Regarding this reason, several benefits are not taken by the real beneficiaries. So they are much more dependent on private companies. Private company agents or intermediaries are playing a role as a participant-observer. Socially, they have assessed to identify the needy to provide a loan. And unconditionally enter into a farmer's life through the help of family relatives and neighbors. This study has examined how the intermediaries or agents unnecessarily enter into the farmer's life and after that, they play a secret role to impose farmer's lifelong indebtedness status which leads farmers to suicidal tendencies. These present studies not only reveal the problems of a farmer's life but also an emphasis on the present government policies for preventing farmers' suicide due to any cause.

Methodology

The study has been conducted in two Panchayet (i.e. Ausgram and Sasanga panchayet) of Purba Bardhaman District in West Bengal. This study is followed by both qualitative and quantitative aspects of research. The study has included 100 farmers as a sample from two panchayet. Purposive sampling method has been implemented in this study. The primary data has been collected through the survey method and also collected through intense interviews. The Focus group discussion method also implies gathering a huge variety of data and to cover the actual perception of the farmers. Secondary data was collected from different books, article, and journals, newspaper, Purba Bardhaman District Magistrate Office, Block Agriculture cell also provide some statistics over this study.

Objectives of the study

This study has some specific objectives. Those are:

1. To examine the socio-economic reason behind the farmers' indebtedness.
2. To analyze the activities of intermediaries or agents who are mainly responsible for creating a pressure of Farmers' suicide.

3. To find the remedies for government schemes for preventing social problems.

Review of Literature

Several studies have been carried out in India and outside of India on various aspects of Farmers' Suicide. These are as follows:

K.V. Ashalatha and N.Rajeshwari (2018) in their Study 'An Overview on Farmers Suicides in India and Intervention to Curb' they establish their investigation through the use of the theory of Durkheim's (1896) the probability of committing suicide are relatively higher with those individuals who are dissatisfied against their expectation. They have described that it was reported as one of the prominent farming-related reasons for suicide in addition to lack of access to irrigation water. In most of the cases, it is the investment that farmer makes and suffer losses so there is a need to design such technologies that need minimum investment.

P.D. Jeromi (2007) in his study 'Farmers' Indebtedness and Suicides-Impact of Agricultural Trade Liberalisation in Kerala', shows that the primary cause that evolves from most studies is 'indebtedness' which again can be linked to mismatching of 'expectation'. A farmer gets indebted when his/her return from the field is not as much as he expected and he becomes unable to pay the loan, which he might have taken for a productive purpose, social purpose or to meet his immediate consumption needs. Indebtedness is quite evident in most of the affected districts. In Kerala indebtedness is higher compared to the national average due to the availability of good informal and formal credit facilities, cash crop production and higher value of assets per household. The average outstanding debts of the farmers vary from Rs 33,907 to Rs 1, 89,153 depending upon the surveys one uses to assess the level of debt.

Dongre and Deshmukh (2012) in their study 'Farmers' suicides in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, India: a qualitative exploration of their causes' reveals that the farmers in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra ranked debt as the most important reason for farmer suicides, followed by addictions, environmental problems, and price issues, amongst others problems. As well as they have also described Vidarbha was caused

by the complex interplay of social, political and environmental constraints. Hence, a comprehensive intervention to ensure self-reliance and capacity building among farmers in modern farming techniques, monitoring and support system for vulnerable farmers, a village-level, transparent system for disbursement of relief packages are required to prevent farmer suicides in future.

Nagthan, Poddar, Kunnal, Basvaraja, Banakar (2011) in their study 'A probe into socio-economic and psychological profile of farmers' suicide in Karnataka they investigated that the socioeconomic causes of farmer suicide in Karnataka also found that agricultural debt was given as the primary factor, leading to farmer suicides in 29/30 suicide cases he calculates that indebtedness is one of the statistically significant factors identifying suicide farmers from controls in Karnataka.

D. Merriott (2016) in his study 'Factors Associated with Farmers Suicide: Crisis in India' he shows that single define cause of farmer suicides in India is impossible, especially considering the relative lack of detailed literature. What can be inferred is that an amalgamation of factors has led to a picture of large-scale farmer indebtedness, that combined with a volatile ecological climate and socioeconomic landscape has left hundreds of thousands, if not millions of farmers vulnerable to a situation of such crushing debt and desperation that many have come to take their own lives. He also thinks that mental illness plays a role. The agrarian crisis that manifests as a culmination of lack of agricultural investment and irrigation improvement, the increased use of non-institutional credit sources (that appears to have increased since the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s), and likely to some extent the reduction of trade barriers appear to best explain the picture of farmer indebtedness and the acceleration of farmer suicides over the period.

U. Patnaik (2003) in his study 'Global Capitalism, Deflation and Agrarian Crisis in Developing Countries' shows that the risk of producing a commercial crop, which is borne entirely by the grower, is greatly increased when the crop is grown for export, which induces price volatility. The Indian farmer is highly price-responsive and has been since

the colonial period. As the cotton price improved in 1990, farmers shifted towards its cultivation from millets, by expanding the net sown area. They took a loan from banks, traders and commission agents, especially in case of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. As prices fell, they were badly hit.

V.Shiva And K.Jalees (2009) in their study 'Farmers Suicides in India' they show that In Kerala, the risky nature of agricultural operations and the tedious process of handling a large number of loans of small amounts at frequent intervals are the most commonly cited reasons for banks to fight shy of giving agricultural credit. While going out of their way to woo corporate borrowers and giving housing and car loans on increasingly easier terms, banks avoid giving loans to farmers, despite mandatory guidelines. According to senior officials of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and NABARD at Thiruvananthapuram, the nationalized banks' off-take to the agricultural sector hovers around 14 percent, short of the stipulated 18 percent of total lending. While collateral security is not essential for small loans, farmers do find it difficult to get credit in the absence of credible collateral security. According to a report, agricultural loans offered by banks under various schemes were not popular among the farmers of Jharkhand, as many of them were unaware of the loan facilities. Farmers in Santhal Parganas were also psychologically credit averse. The farmers in the state, most of whom are tribals, also complain that due to the Tenancy Act in the state they are unable to furnish the land ownership requirements like security. To overcome this problem, the State Level Banker's Committee (SLBC) had suggested that a 'Land Possessing Certificate' issued by the circle officer concerned should be treated as a security. In 2002-2003, against a target of Rs. 311.07 crores, banks managed to disburse only about Rs. 218 crores.

Small and marginal farmers are forced either to sell or give land on lease to the rich class. This is not only swelling the ranks of land-less agricultural workers but has also begun negating the gains of land reforms. According to a report, in Burdwan, 60 percent of 224,051 patta holders owning about 80,000 hectares of vested land under the government's land reforms programme have been forced to sell off their uneconomical holdings. The

buyers are mostly big landholders or the new rural rich who have been investing heavily in farming.

N.S.R Sravanth and N Sundaram(2019) in their study 'Agricultural Crisis and Farmers Suicides in India' they have shown that most of the farmer's suicide was due to the distress, crop failure, indebtedness, poverty, lack of institutional credit, poor irrigation, lack of awareness on new technologies, a high-interest rate of non-institutional agencies and lack of government policies. The review shed light on the fact that there was a lack of research done specifically on the plight of tenant farmers' suicides in India. Previous studies had also focused on the time period when suicide may occur. They also noted that reasons for suicide changed as per the gender of the farming community. Caste also played a role in the case of farmers' suicide. Thus, one can say that demographic factors played a major role concerning farmers' suicide.

NCRB Report, Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (2015) shows average suicide in West Bengal

Number of Farmers' Suicides(Self-employed(Farming/ Agriculture) in West Bengal

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total	Average no.of suicides
West Bengal	993	807	0	0	230	0	2030	339
Total all over India	15933	14004	13727	11744	12336	12602	80346	13391

(Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (various Issues), NCRB, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India and Sivagnanam (2017)

NCRB Report, 2014 shows the possible reasons for suicide in all over India.

Distribution of Farmers' Suicide by Causes in India: 2014

Details	Reasons for Suicide	Percentage
Poverty	149	2.6
Property Dispute	52	0.9
Marriage related issues	121	2.1
Non-settlement of marriage	25	0.4
Dowry issues	42	0.7
Extra marital affairs	5	0.1
Divorce	7	0.1

Contd.

Others	42	0.7
Family problems	1135	20.1
Farming issues	969	17.2
Failure of crops (Total)	952	16.8
Due to natural calamities	491	8.7
due to other reasons	461	8.2
inability to sell	17	0.3
Illness (Total)	745	13.2
Bankruptcy or indebtedness (Total)	1163	20.6
due to crop loan	965	17.1
due to farm equipment loan	22	0.4
due to non-agricultural loan	176	3.1
causes not known	231	4.1
other causes	828	14.7
Total	5650	100.0

(Source: National Crime Record Bureau, New Delhi, Note: family problems include marriage related issues and Sivagnanam (2017)

Data Representation and Results

Primary data were collected through the survey and interview method from two Gram Panchayet of 10 Villages. Here all the ethical issues and consent to the participants were followed. Detail of representation is in given below:

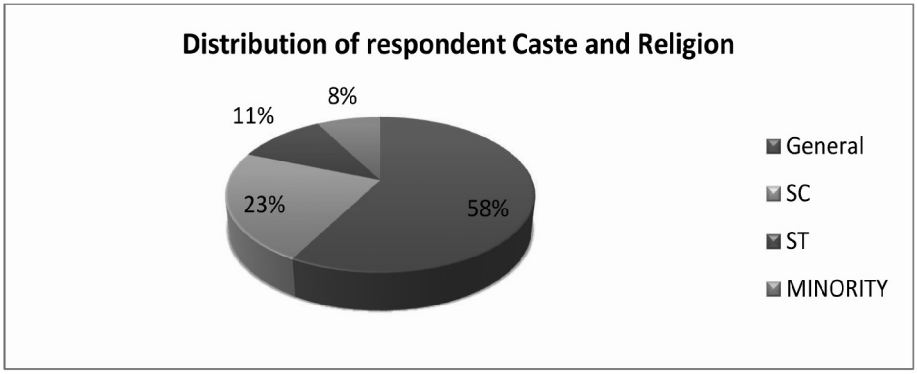

Chart 1: Distribution of respondent according to caste and religion

The chart shows that 58 percent of respondents were from the general category, 23 percent were from the Scheduled Caste category, 11 percent respondent were from the scheduled tribe category and 8 percent were from minority category.

Table 1: Age wise division of the respondent

Age(Years)	Category	Respondent	Percentage (percent)
	Young age(20-35yrs)	25	25
	Middle Age(36-50yrs)	55	55
	Old age(51 and above)	20	20
	Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data)

This table indicates 55 percent of respondents were in middle age, 25 percent were at a young age and 20 percent of respondents were old.

Table 2: Educational qualification of the respondent

Respondent	Qualification	No of Respondent	Percentage (percent)
	Illiterate	8	8
	Primary (5^{th} Class)	19	19
	Upper Primary(8^{th} Class)	31	31
	Madhyamik(10^{th} Class)	12	12
	Higher Secondary(12^{th} Class)	17	17
	Graduation and above	13	13
	Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data)

The table shows that 31 percent of respondents' education qualification is Upper Primary (8^{th}) level, 19 percent of respondents' education qualification is primary level, 17 percent is Higher Secondary (12^{th}), 13 percent is graduation and above education level, 12 percent of respondents education qualification is Madhyamik (10^{th}). The most important thing is observed in that sample is only 8 percent are illiterate. The tendency of the respondents shows that 92 percent of total sample is literate.

Table 3: Respondent monthly income status

Amount(Rs/-)	Respondent	Percentage(percent)
1000-5000	4	4
5000-10000	14	14
10000-15000	23	23
15000-20000	30	30
20000-25000	12	12
25000-30000	11	11
30000 and above	4	4
No income or irregular income (below 1000)	2	2
Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data)

The above table indicates that the tendency of 30 percent of respondents' per month income is between Rs 15000 to 20000, 23 percent of respondents' per month income is between Rs 10000/- to 15000, 14 percent of respondents' per month income is between Rs 5000 to 10000, 12 percent of respondents' per month income is between Rs/-20000 to 25000about 4000-5000, 11 percent of respondents' per month income is between Rs/-25000 to 30000,4 percent of respondents' per month income is above Rs/-30000, 4 percent of respondents' per month income is below Rs/-5000 and importantly 2 percent respondent reported they have no such monthly income.

Table 4: Landholding nature or size of the respondent

Land Holdingamount	Size of Land	Number of Respondents	Percentage percent
	No land	5	5
	Less than 1 Bigha[7]	6	6
	1-5 Bigha	19	19
	5-10 Bigha	28	28
	10-15 Bigha	12	12
	15-20 Bigha	17	17
	20 Bigha and above	13	13
	Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data,)

The above table shows that the tendency of 95 percent of respondents has owned land i.e. <1 Bigha to above 20 bighas and importantly 5 percent of respondents reported that they have no land. Either they have cultivated in share land or worked as agricultural labour.

Table 5: 'Krishak Bandhu' Schemes Enrolment status of the respondent

Respondent	Status of the Krishak Bandhu Scheme	No.of Respondent	Percentage percent
	Not knowing about the scheme	25	25
	Knowing but not interested	8	8
	Enrolment already is done	25	25
	Application in process	35	35
	Document related problem	7	7
	Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data)

[7]Burdwan Distrcit Land size Indicator 1 hectare = 2.4712 acre or 4 bighas approx; 1 acre = 1.6 bighas or 32 kathas; 1 bigha = 20 kathas

The above table shows that the tendency of 25 percent of respondents do not know about the government schemes and 25 percent of respondents have already enrolled, 35 percent respondents' enrolment is in process, 7 percent respondents' documental procedure arise so that they cannot apply as per norms and importantly 8 percent respondents reported that they have no interest to apply this government schemes.

Table 6: Indebtedness causes from the respondent side

Respondent	Indebtedness Causes	Number of Respondents	Percentage percent
	No land	5	5
	Less than 1 Bigha	6	6
	1-5 Bigha	19	19
	5-10 Bigha	28	28
	10-15 Bigha	12	12
	15-20 Bigha	17	17
	20 Bigha and above	13	13
	Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data)

The above table shows that the tendency of 28 percent of respondents have 5-10 Bighas of agricultural land, 19 percent of respondents have 1-5 Bighas land,17 percent of respondents have 15-20 Bighas land,13 percent respondents have 20bighas and above land, 12 percent respondents have 10-15 bighas land and 6 percent respondents have no land of their own. Either they are sharecropper or work in other lands as agricultural labour.

Table 7: Preference of loan takes institution by the respondent

Respondent	Preference for taking Loan		No of Respondents	Percentage percent
	Government Institute	Nationalised Bank	21	21
		Cooperative	8	8
		NABARD SHG and LIC others	11	11
	Non-Government Institute	Private Finance Company	18	18
		Private Bank and other	20	20
		Money Lender	22	22
		Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data)

The above table shows that the tendencies of 40 percent of respondents prefer to take a loan from government institution and most interestingly 60 percent of respondents prefer to take loans from the non-government institution. Respondents reveal that government institution employees' non-cooperation behaviour, huge documental procedure, and other insured condition insists them afraid of this.

Table 8: Medium of approaches made by Non-Governmental Institute regularly according to the respondent

Respondent	Medium of approaches	Number of Respondents	Percentage percent
	Done by Non Governmental institute		
	By Spam Call	25	25
	By Spam SMS	15	15
	Regularly arranged display outlet	17	17
	Intermediaries or agent visit farmers house for an appointment	43	43
	Total	100	100

(Source: Field Primary Data)

The above table shows that 43 percent of respondents reported that intermediaries or agents visited a farmer's house for the appointment. Regarding the discussion about the various loan schemes, in other cases 25 percent informed that they received company spam call regularly,17 percent of respondents also said that private company also arranged a display outlet in their villages.

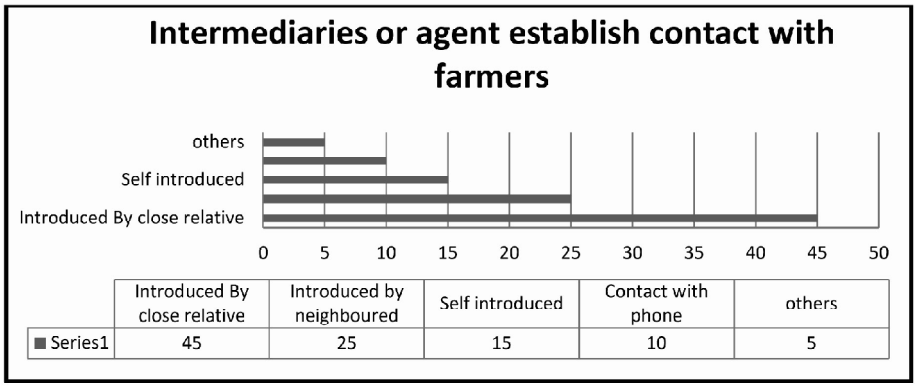

Chart 2: According to the respondent Intermediaries or agent establish contact with farmers through
(Source: Field Primary Data)

The above chart shows that intermediaries or agents get contact with farmers through 45 percent of the nearest relative, 25 percent are introduced by a neighbour,15 percent are introduced by self and 10 percent are introduced through mobile phone and 5 percent are introduced by other medium.

Summary of one Focus Group Discussion

On 2nd February 2019 in the village of Ausgram bazaar chok, a discussion was held with 20 farmers of this village at 4.30 P.M. Regarding the issue of possible reasons for farmer's indebtedness status of this village is illustrated are:

- 65 percent of respondents (13farmers) said that easy access to the private loan is one of the reasons. The private company did not assess the condition of the farmers. Sometimes their other needs were also fulfilled through this kind of agriculture loan.
- 45 percent of respondents (9 farmers) pointed out that if a person was already in a loan, private companies approved other new loan, but Government Banks didn't provide them a loan if one of them was already in a loan. So, farmers preferred private finance companies at this ground.
- 55 percent of respondents (11farmers) pointed out that in a crucial situation private company-sanctioned loans with a high rate of interest within an hour. So not only they used it for agriculture purposes but also for other purposes.
- 65 percent of respondents (13farmers) said that if a person availed more than one loan then the repayment percentage was not increased, either he had to engage in other income activity or he had to fall in the indebtedness condition.
- 75 percent of respondents (15) said that if a person took a loan of Rs/-1 lakh through private finance company person has to pay total Rs/-298000 in 36 months tenures of EMI. Where per month of loan percentage is near about 4 percentages. In some cases, intermediaries play a role to insist to take a loan.
- 55 percent of respondents (11farmers) said that a private company had arranged gimmick training. Their agents discussed fraud opportunities to grow the interest of the farmers.

Discussion

Relative to other districts, the Purba Burdwan district is better known for its predominant agricultural activities. Because of its highest position in rice production in West Bengal, the District is truly called 'The granary of West Bengal'. Rice is exported from this area to the various districts of the state and even to neighbour countries. Almost all varieties of rice are produced in this region, which can mainly be classified into three types depending on the season of cultivation, such as autumn rice, winter rice, and summer rice. The autumn paddy is known as 'Aus'. The pre-monsoon '*Aus*' covers May to September. The winter or monsoon paddy, known as '*Amon*', is grown from June to December. The summer or dry season paddy is popularly known as '*Boro*'. The sowing time of summer paddy is November to February and harvesting time is March to June. The growing season of '*Boro*' sometimes overlaps with '*Aus*'. Mainly in the time of cultivation '*Boro'* required much equipment than others. During the cultivation farmers required liquid cash in hand. In this time loan taking a percentage is high rather than other times.

Due to the globalisation one can easily contact an intermediary or agent in a fraction of second. Farmers' close relative, neighbour, and most reliable person some time introduce agents, as they get a commission from the agents. Within avail, a loan one can easily get other loans from a private finance company. Some of the agents offer illegally loan without any such information to individual persons. Relatives or neighbour persons also silently monitor the loan repay status or regularly insist to pay the EMI. If one month gets defaulter for EMI, there comes pressure from close relative side. Once loan gets start no alternation or changing opportunity not yet come until repay. The interest of loans sometimes exceeds the amount of actual principle. The weekly basis or monthly basis interest has to pay by a farmer. In some cases, it is reported that near about 40 to 45 percent of interest has to pay per annum. Pressure not only comes from the company level but also comes from family members. In some way finance company agents' make contact with some local-level political leader through some amount of agreement. This is another reason to generate pressure from local level leaders. In some cases, intermediaries provide them some loan

schemes which mainly to repay the existing loan and they dreamed them for their future aspect. Through this loan intermediaries get profit but silently they have imposed a higher rate of interest schemes which creates farmers' deep neck condition. Sometimes government provides subsidies loans, short-term bank loans, and crop insurance benefits to the farmers. But most of the cases this type of benefit only received by rich farmers or showing political colour is one of the criteria receiving the scheme. Some bureaucrats from Block Development Office or Panchayat office gives original schemes to others in some corrupt way. Such short-term government initiative was not enough to stop the farmer's suicides. For this reason, in two villages of Purba Bardhaman District 'Krishak Bandhu prokalpa' is not highlighted with its actual service. Some cases claim reimburse process takes a huge time to support the farmers. Therefore, irrespective of political colour the state government should provide subsidies loan facilities through government Banks or other institutions in an easy way, also irrigation facilities, crop insurance facilities, minimum support price for their products have to endorse as early as possible. Government village level monitoring committee has to implement properly and should take necessary action regarding the fraud corporate finance company, such of them are unethically access to village level with the help of local people.

Main Findings of the Study

- Most of the farmers have adequate levels of education and schooling but in the gimmick, they are unable to understand the loan percentage or interest rate. Most of the farmers were very poor in terms of resource endowment. Some of them were extremely poor, or from marginal and small-scale categories. Several agreement papers are mainly in English language, without internalising or perusal the condition in proper manner they sign the agreement.
- Agriculture dependency on climate and seasonal weather is creating huge risks and uncertainties of production in agriculture. Most of the time situation pushes them towards the depression as there is drought and flood-like conditions increased in both summer and monsoon sea-

son. These factors weaken them to repay the loan which they have to borrow earlier and bound to take another loan again for cultivation.

- Most of the time farmers prefer to take a loan from non-institutional credit (i.e. the corporate finance company) than the Government institutional sources. It is implied that the money lenders, landlords, and traders more access credit facilities than the cooperative and commercial banks. Because of the intermediary's maximum time contact with one of the family members from their house as a medium. And the basis of faith they easily agree for loans. Without the documental process, intermediaries precede their loan in a short time.
- Family members sometimes work as a company medium. Without invest, they earned handsome money from corporate companies. This type of secret relations is not revealed. They also pressurised them for overdue of EMI.
- The majority of farmers take loans for farming, but they utilise the loan for other purposes like social functions, family expenses, construction of houses, and investment in business children's education, family expenses, and luxury. Paying the interest of the loan regularly is not possible for them due to financial complications. It is also revealed that the social causes are also the most prominent reason for farmer's suicides among small and marginal farmers. Rapid social changes are one of the reasons behind social causes.
- Indebtedness is one of the worst reasons for taking an extreme step to commit suicides. The agricultural loan is used for their son/daughter education, hoping that they repay the loan after their child will get a job. It reveals that the farmers are mainly dependent on money lending private institutions for their additional needs. Most of the farmers have not adequate resources to repay the loan and this leads to suicide rates among farmers community.
- Finance companies do not reveal the actual interest rate and other terms and conditions to the farmers during filling form for loan procedure. Farmer believes that their close relatives are involved in this case, so no chances of fraud or any other activity similar to that. In this trust, later they are forced to pay a high level of interest.

Limitation of Study and Suggestion for Future Research

Based on this studies following suggestion are made;

- Due to insufficient time framework, large samples not analysed which is not possible to know the deep root problems. Hopefully, further study will include broader issues.
- Samples of this study include Male only. Female farmers' perception is missing in this study. So it should include in future studies.
- Here I only emphasis the reason for indebtedness. Another possible indicator for farmer's suicide is missing in this study, it should take a scope for future research.
- Economical activity and other possible works which being done by farmers should be taken a record through the picture or other modes of archives.
- A suggestion in this regard to that the government should set up a customer service point or financial counselling centre in all village areas to prevent unethical activity of private corporate companies. This will also support agricultural associations which will be easy to identify situation of the farmers.
- The State government should introduce a convergence with other departments. For this reason, a farmer can easily get benefited by other schemes which uplift their social amenities and condition.

Conclusion

The study focuses on the secret relation of intermediaries and indebtedness of farmers' life. Most of the farmers' suicide in West Bengal was reported due to the distress, crop failure, crop disease, indebtedness, poverty, lack of institutional credit, poor irrigation, and lack of awareness on new technologies. Regarding suicide, no one is concerned about how the incident occurred? Previously, many studies conducted only to focus on the time period when the suicide occurred. It also noticed that reasons for suicide are also changed as per the basis of gender, geographical locations. Caste and class also played a role in the case of farmers' suicide. However, real cause was not revealed and related it with some other activity such as

their relationship force to commit suicide. Farmer's deep neck condition mostly comes due to avail of more than one loan. In some cases, the farmers utilise the profit in other social aspects. Loans in agricultural sector created a vicious circle, in which farmers cannot emancipate from loan. Prestigious matter, family fame and other expectation are also involved in such kind of suicidal activity. Farmers' knowledge regarding crop insurance and the other loan issue related matter has to emphasise through intensive financial awareness. The government should have to arrange financial literacy camps. Subsidised loan or subvention must be introduced through Government. Panchayet and other government offices should have to introduce huddles free information centre. As well as State government should take an initiative to prevent suicides of farmers regarding their indebtedness or through some financial assurance. In this regard, government should support farmers to build up farmer's ability to realise the untold reality and overcome the indebtedness status.

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CHAPTER 2

Indian Agrarian Distress in Neoliberal Age

Monika Yadav and Lovely Kumari

Abstract

Indian agrarian economy is one of the ancient agrarian economies of the World dates back to the era of Indus valley civilization. Geographically India consists of the world's area of 4 percent but feeds 17 percent of the world's human population and approx., 15 percent of the livestock. Agriculture is the crucial base of the Indian economy and contributes 14 percent of gross domestic products. It is one of the largest private sector activities in India. But presently, the agriculture sector in India has undergone several structural changes. However, the farmer's protest and raising their demands is not a recent phenomenon. The first-ever significant farmer's protest dates back to the colonial period against a hike in the land lease and taxes on agriculture land in Bengal. The recent trends of Indian agriculture are alarming because of old age techniques of agriculture which are unable to cope with foreign competitors. All these trends such as the decline in the price of commodities, the rate of growth of the agriculture market are going down, widening of disparities between agriculture and non-agricultural sectors; increasing numbers of farmer's suicides are indicating that Indian agriculture sector is facing a huge crisis today. A survey report was done by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Lokniti for Bharat Krishak Samaj which reveals that 75 percent of

Indian farmers want to give up their farming. An important and recent trend of the Agrarian crisis is increasing numbers of farmers' suicides. According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released in 2020, more than 10, 349 farmers committed suicide in 2018. Recent data says after the 1990's-decade farmer's suicide is increasing with every upcoming year. So here in this paper, we will try to link globalization and agriculture to understand the effects of globalization on Indian agriculture. What are the various changes that have taken place after globalization on Indian culture that lead Indian farmers under debt, we will also try to assess those changes such as the decline in government investment? Also, we have seen that various farmers' movements rise with their distinct demands. Our major focus will be on important government policies and economic measures taken by the government to deal with this agrarian crisis. This paper will critically evaluate those policies and measures including a brief discussion on various measures that will make clarity on the green revolution, white revolution by the past government to deal with this crisis. According to the latest Niti Aayog report, the current Government promised to double the farmer income by 2022, this statement itself is very much controversial as per present situation, and this paper will also highlight all such government initiatives to reach this goal.

Introduction

It is impossible to have a healthy and sound society without proper respect for the soil.

-Peter Maurin

For around 2.5 million years, humans have fed themselves via the gathering of food by relying on the plants and animals without any interferences on the uses of a variety of animals and plants spread across various regions of the world from East Africa to the middle east, Europe to Asia, but slowly the techniques and mode of their feeding mechanism changed as they started to domesticate the animals

*and plants species by seed sowing, watering plants, planting grain, gaining fruits and meat called as Agricultural revolution, which as per experts stated that this bring more prosperity in their lives by settled lifestyle slowing turning them as a pampered elite the community who now heavily relied only on the growth and taming of animals rather than hunting and gathering mode of living, slowing the pace of living became difficult and unsatisfactory as hunting which reduces the effects of starvation has slowly engulfed them in the new issues of population explosion leading to more stomach to feed with the low incentive for production, their lives slowly became on the verge of crisis as they work more than an average forger and get worse dietary choices in the return. This agricultural revolution has itself brought numerous changes in the life of humans depending now on the factor of geographical location, climate, ecology, location not on how well they adapt in the foraging and hunting modes of life.....(**Sapiens - A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari)***

India alone consists of four percent of world areas and contributes to 17 percent of the food security of the whole world. With the time agriculture of India has undergone structural changes. Post-liberal age reforms trends such as a decline in the price of commodities, rate of growth of agriculture market is going down, widening of disparities between agriculture and non-agricultural sector, increasing numbers of farmer's suicides are indicating towards that Indian agriculture sector is in the declining period. No doubt government measures are continuously trying to heal this disparity and agrarian distress but fail to reach a minimum goal. In a neoliberal age, almost 75 percent of farmers want to give their farming, the number of farmers with the upcoming years is decreasing whereas farmers' labourers are increasing.[1] Most of the Indian farmers are under debt because of not

[1]Mukherjee, Sanjeeb (2014), More than 75% farmers want to leave their occupation, [Online website] accessed on 27 January 2020, available at URL: https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/more-than-75-farmers-want-to-leave-their-occupation-114031100966_1.html

even being able to earn their minimum wages from agricultural activities. Looking at the last decade we will find that the productivity of most crops has stagnated. But still, farmers are not able to raise their net income because of the low-level production. Also, market imperfection and competitiveness are crucial factors in creating market margin. It's not like that the pre- globalization setting of Indian agriculture was best but still it would not be wrong to state that the period of Indian agriculture before the 1990s was far better than the present. The measures and benefits have benefited farmers, but still unable to attain their minimum goals. There is a need to show serious concern and prioritize the agriculture sector over all others.

Historical Background

India is having more than 50 percent population depending on the agricultural sector with low capital to output contribution in the agriculture sector. (Indian Economic Survey 2018 by Govt. of India). Indian agriculture has remained a contested subject of any developing economy like India as the major population is agriculture-dependent and any govt., the manifesto is surrounded by giving better farmer policy and upgrading amenities to the farmer.

During the 1947 era of independence, govt. had launched various schemes in the name of the integrated production program, growing more food campaigns, five-year plans of 1951-56 where agricultural farmers were in the heavy debt burden of a moneylender, rainfall patterns differences and small and scattered landholdings were existing. To bring reforms they focused on the agricultural development of the country via removal of the intermediary i.e. zamindars, protecting the tenants by tenancy reforms, a ceiling of land holdings and distribution of surplus landholdings among the landless farmer to reduce the nature of vertical inequality within the farming community existing and affecting mostly the small and marginal farming community and for making India self - sufficient in the major food grains to feed the population of the nation as well as emerge as a major source food exporter for other nations, during the reforms phase, the govt. gave considerable attention to bringing institutional reforms by setting up

community development programs, expanding the transportation, power, marketing and smoothen out basic the facility of the credit reforms, irrigational reforms, seed technology, etc as the major initiative taken during the successive five-year plan of the government. The agricultural growth can also be credited to using the quote of 'blessing in disguise' as the major boost of initiating Green revolution can be credited to the US policy of PL 480 program initiated to pressurize our country for gaining political advantage for the U.S govt. during war causing India's population at a much-disgraced situation by keeping the supply low on the verge of the crisis of the food of the country (Hatti - 2017). The various programs of the government to develop agriculturally scenario area electrification, farm mechanization, use of fertilizers, HYV seeds, reclamation of land areas and developing a production revolution in the country via the green revolution, white revolution, operation flood, etc are some of the major achievements that the government initiated to bring self-sufficiency in the agricultural growth of the nations during the period.

Post-Globalization Agriculture Sector

Globalization involves cross border trade, cultural exchanges, integration of a country's economy and exchange of technology and flow of investment. During the 1990s the Narasimha Rao government in India took the path to globalize the Indian economy. This liberalization and privatization of the Indian economy have a great impact on every field including agriculture, education, health, corporation, and business sector. On one side Large sectors enjoyed the benefits of globalization, whereas small sectors had to go through negative shedding of globalization. Similarly, the agricultural sector is also the one that has negative implications more than the positive benefit of the globalized policy. It was observed that enormous changes came in India's GDP rate just after the decade of globalization. Other than GDP contribution to the corporate and manufacturing sector, agriculture in India was facing decline and slow growth. To meet conditions of WTO, IMF and World Bank Indian government removed the custom duties and almost dropped them so that whoever wants could import easily, also export policy turned liberalized, tariff and taxes of many products were

drastically lowered. Not just this Indian government also started reducing their agriculture budget and started investing in the industrial sector, and later the industrial sector slowly started taking over the biggest private sector which is Indian agriculture compared to the 1980's decade of the 1990s have witnessed a major decline in both food and non-food grains. The largest harm has been faced by oilseeds which saw a decline of approximately 4 percent as compared to pre neoliberal age. But after the 2000s all crops including food and non-food started facing decline.[2] Not just this self-sufficient India started importing food crops for their domestic market at a very high price from domestic production. This food import

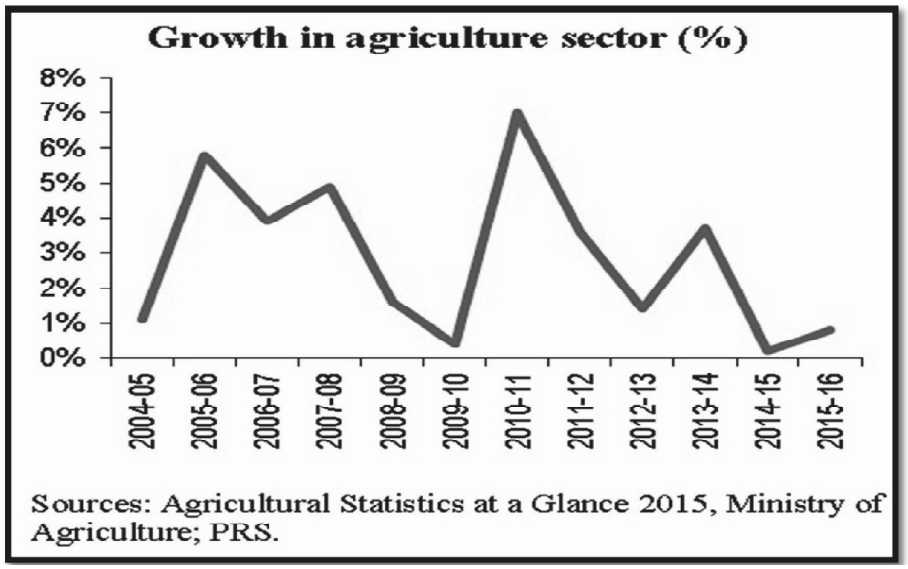

Fig. Graph representing the growth of the Agricultural sector from 2004 to 2016.
Pic credit – Agricultural Statistics by Ministry of Agriculture

not just Indian agriculture but has impacted the whole Indian economy.

Emerging Factors of Agrarian Distress

Government apathy and low investment

[2]Sharma Vijaypaul, Report on Problems and Prospects of Oilseeds Production in India, Centre for Management in Agriculture (CMA) Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad, 2014.

To meet the World Bank and IMF requirements, the government of India reduced its agriculture budget drastically. This impacted a drastic decline in government investment in the agricultural sector, which brought Indian farmers under the financial crunch. Low government investment has also forced farmers to borrow money from money lenders on high-interest rates. Investment is a major tool by any government for the development of the agriculture sector, but the Indian government not only cut all the investment in the agriculture sector but also decreased the minimum support price. Due to that farmers were bound to sell their agriculture product to the government at lower prices. Farmers have no other option left instead of selling their crops at lesser than the cost of production. Government investment in the agriculture sector through subsidies water, electricity, seeds, fertilizer and providing accessible markets after cultivation helps farmers' income.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN mentioned that about 70 percent of India's rural households "still depend primarily on the agriculture sector for their livelihood". According to the Economic Survey of 2017-18, the agriculture sector accounted for 49 percent of India's total workforce however earned just 16 percent (or less than 1/6th) of the total income (GDP). Most of the Indian farmers are dependent on government investment in agriculture such as irrigation and power subsidies; fertilizer subsidy; seed subsidy; credit subsidy etc. The income of farmers through agriculture depends on the percent of what government budget allocated to the agriculture sector.[3]

There are several other issues such as the definition of farmers is confusing, the government has no clear definition of the farmer. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar failed to answer the question, who were farmers in India was asked in Parliament. "The government's ambiguity has serious

[3]Prasanna Mohanty, Decoding Slowdown: Govt apathy and low investment continue to plague the agriculture sector (Business today), 2019

https://www.businesstoday.in/sectors/agriculture/decoding-slowdown-agriculture-sector-govt-apathy-low-investment-plagues-farmers-income/story/381618.html

implications for the design and beneficiaries of the schemes meant to help them, including its flagship PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi)". [4]Due to lack of definition, approaches, lack of proper documentation, farmers are unable to catch the benefit and schemes of the Indian government. Since the 1990s borrowing money and loan patterns have undergone several changes and interest rates and hidden policies were not explained by the government banks. The availability of loans from the government bank became very difficult since farmers were tilted up towards private banks for easy bank loans but high-interest rates.

Recently the government has introduced the latest policy to provide a loan on *aadhar* card (Unique Identification Authority of India) basis. The new idea was highly criticized by the agriculture experts as due to labour work most of the farmers are unable to give their biometric and thumb impression which makes them not eligible for low-interest loans. All these lead Indian farmers under the trap of debt which leads farmers to give up their own life. It would not be wrong to say that government investment is a crucial factor for the declining stage of Indian agriculture. The government has moved its steps towards the industrial sector. During the 1970's-80's government was keen on improving fertilizers, yield production. Agriculture took the core position in government budget during the period of the 1970'-80's. But in a neoliberal age, the government has turned its focus towards rapid technological development. Between 1975 to 1980 the government's priority was the agriculture sector which includes supply quality of high-yielding varieties seeds. The government pushed fertilizer production and introduced such programs and designed to advocate farmers for optimum utilization of surface and groundwater. Farmers' service societies were launched to provide credit to farmers during the process and to provide market after the production. The nationalization of coal began to yield results. The provision in the budget for food subsidy at 100 crores increased

[4]Jebaraj, Priscilla,Who is a farmer? Government has no clear definition, 2019, available on URL: https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/agriculture/who-is-a-farmer-government-has-no-clear-definition/article30131511.ece

to Rs 295 crore. But Due to continuation of farmer's suicide and agrarian distress forced the government to think more of Indian agricultural conditions.[5] The agricultural budget finally got hike by 22 percent for the first time in the post-reform age. But have not much relief on farmer's debt. This increment undoubtedly helps in crop production, but direct benefit still not reached to farmers. The budget increased allocation for agriculture and watershed development. Agriculture budget was increased by 22 percent of the revised estimate, but there were no initiatives to lift farmers from the debt-ridden operations or offer a vision of agriculture that was sustainable.[6]Once again the present government moved its focus on declining agriculture conditions and took the initiative to improve irrigation facilities through the revival of irrigation projects. Also, as I discussed above that by 2022 the current NDA government is planning to double the farmer income. We will discuss this below. One of the major promises made by the Finance Minister was to double the income of farmers by 2022. The target looked overly ambitious as two successive years of drought had already hit the annual average earnings of 90 million agricultural households.

Removal of Customs Duties and Liberal Import of Agriculture Products

Undoubtedly, globalization refers to free-market age, where there are no hard restrictions on import and export, no trade tariff barriers and also no custom duties and other charges. This age has given rapid speed to exchanges of trade, liberalization of the economy has no doubt increased the export and import in post-economic reform. At the beginning of the reform period, the export and import of agricultural products rapidly increased but later due to low international prices and liberalized economy

[5]Roomana Hukil, Analysis of Union Budget since 1947 (down to earth), 2019
https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/economy/analysis-of-union-budget-since-1947-56867

[6]Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Substantial Rise in Allocation for Farm Schemes; New Schemes on Nutri-Farms, Farmer Producer Organisations, Livestock Agriculture Gets Major Boost in Budget 2013-14 (2013).
https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=93022

attracted more imports. Because of this globalised age, there are restrictions on imports and export, which not only increase new liberal policies on imports but also encourage low prices of food and non-food crops through import. For example, Srilankan coffee got a center position in India and Indian coffee got a marginal position. This is due to a change in the post-reform Exim policy of the Indian government. The market price of Srilankan coffee goes down compared to Indian coffee due to the high cost of production in India. This competition was also a major factor that is responsible for the agrarian decline and slow growth. Similar issues are faced by other crops produced by Indian farmers. According to reports and studies, it also comes to our notice that the post-reform period in India has not only led to an increase in imports but export also. This shows that instead of maximizing export and their contribution in GDP, liberal policy and cut in trade and tariff lead India more dependent. Now India's import culture is increasing as the free market attracts producer to gain their cost production from India.

Dependency on Environmental Factors and Lack of Modern Techniques

Neo-liberal age is the age of technology, the age of competitiveness which increased the use of technology in all sectors including agriculture. In and almost all the developed countries are using high ended technologies to increase agriculture production however Indian farmers are unable to compete. Developed countries are not only using technologies but their government is also providing high subsidies to them to export their agriculture product to developing countries. Due to a lack of technical knowledge and availability, Indian farmers are largely dependent on climate/weather for agriculture production. Illiteracy and lack of knowledge about government programs and policies is another loophole for the farmer to compete in global competition. This is also a major decline in Indian agricultural practice. Also, Most of the Indian farmers are not aware of multi-farming. They plant one crop on the same agricultural land for many years. Due to that infertility decreased and it leads to depletion of the soil. Modern techniques are capital intensive and small farmers unable to afford

those practices. Instead, small Indian farmers prefer to use labour-intensive traditional agricultural practice because of which they have good quality products but less in quantity. It shows that even after being better quality crops, modern states take competition in favour of them. Another main advantage developed state is enjoying, that modern agriculture is being consolidated into one large farm. This led to easy access for mechanized equipment and the use of hybrid seeds for increased productivity and disease resistance (Schmitz & Moss 2016). It can be said that modern technology in the post-reform era has drastically impacted Indian agriculture and farmers of India are not in an initial position to fight with modern technological machinery of agriculture. Because of this agricultural land doesn't get spoiled. Before economic reforms, there was nothing related to worldwide competition which Indian farmers had to face. Earlier, production and consumption were enough and there was no such market competition.

Lack of Agriculture Research and Studies

AISHE-2019 survey report exposed that, there are currently 993 universities in India but out of that only 74 universities are recognized by the Indian council of agricultural research (an autonomous body working for the development of the agricultural sector under the ministry of agriculture). It is easy to observe that not even 10 percent of the total universities are agricultural universities in India.[7] Not just this course curriculum, the learning objective of these universities are not much modern technology based. Research and studies contribution in developed countries increased their production however it is lacking in India. At present, 315 million out of a total population of India is the student population. Even being the largest sector & main occupation of more than 50 percent of Indians, this low number of researches in this field is a remarkable drawback. Before the 1990s more than half of Indians were engaged in

[7]All India Survey on Higher Education, Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development Department Of Higher Education New Delhi 2015, available at UR: http://aishe.nic.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=196

primary sector activities but after economic reform farmers started to join the secondary sector. Most of the research has also shifted its research area from primary to the secondary and tertiary sector. In the post-reform period, most researchers are keen on scientific and technological research. Rarely people would like to deal with the challenging field of agricultural research. Earlier in the pre neoliberal age, researchers had diverted thoughts related to agricultural studies. Now there is a decrease in research on Indian agriculture which leads to no recommendations to improve the condition and try to find the ground causes of Indian agrarian distress. No doubt the Indian council of agricultural research (ICAR) is contributing as much as they can, but still not able to stop this rapid agrarian decline. ICAR still needs to work much harder to meet the present expectations of farmers.

Declining Number of Farmers

The Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), based in Delhi, found that given an option majority of farmers in the country would prefer to take up some other work. Due to a deepening crisis in the agriculture sector, 76 percent of farmers want to give up farming.[8] Various research/ studies conducted public and private partners on the agricultural crisis in India have explained that several cases have been noticed in which the majority of farmers in the country would prefer to take up some other work due to changing weather and not getting their cost of production. Lower income, depressing future, and repeatedly loss and crop failure and also lack of government support are some of the reasons to give up farming. Most of the farmers are continuing their farming because of their family pressure or they are unable to do other works. Around 18 percent

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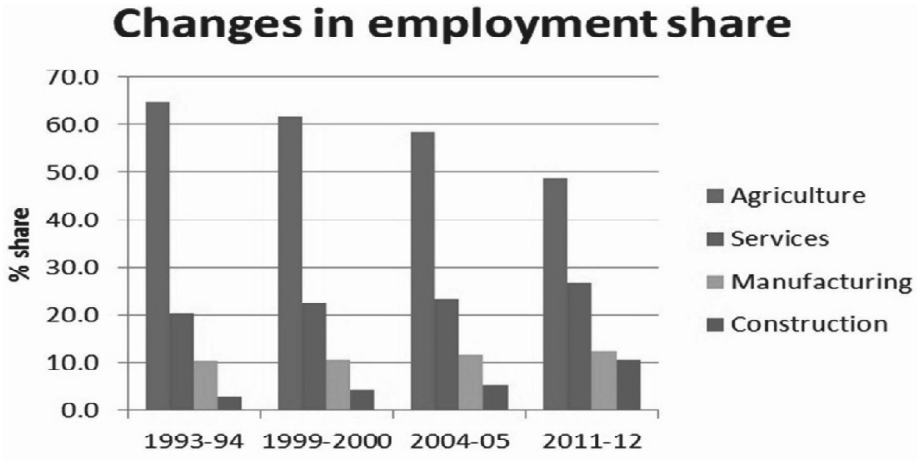
[8]Down to Earth (2018), ndia's deepening farm crisis: 76% farmers want to give up farming, shows study, available at URL: https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/indias-deepening-farm-crisis-76-farmers-want-to-give-up-farming-shows-study-43728

[9]Jyotika Sood, India's deepening farm crisis: 76% of farmers want to give up farming, (down to earth) 2018.

https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/indias-deepening-farm-crisis-76-farmers-want-to-give-up-farming-shows-study-43728



Source: http://www.indiatogether.org/imbalance-between-gdp-growth-and-employment-in-agriculture-manufacturing-services-economy

Fig. Chart showing how farmers have given up their farming occupation and giving more preference to non-agricultural activities.

of respondents surveyed said it was because of family pressure that they are continuing with farming.[9]

The statistics show that only 54.6 percent of total workers in India are now part of the agriculture sector with a decline of 3.6 percent as compared to 2001. This shows that most of the farmers would like to go for non-agricultural activities. The survey report said that mostly the benefit of government policy and schemes goes in favour of big landholders and farmers. Small farmers left with their present condition. They have no other option that's why 70 percent of Indian farmers want to give up on farming business.

Special Economic Zones

In recent Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced participation in flagship programmes like; Make in India, Skill India, and Start-up India, etc. to advance technological developments in India. As we can note in the recent five-year plan and policies the Indian government has mainly focused to enhance the industrial and technological sectors. To make favourable conditions to invite foreign investments, the government is seeking land to establish special economic zones. For industrial and for commercial

purposes Indian government is taking over agricultural land. According to the latest report, 42 percent of India's Land Area mainly used for the agriculture purpose are affected through a drought[10] which is responsible for the declining agriculture. The latest World Bank released data shows that the industrial sector is taking over agricultural land. Special economic zones constructed by the government is a better example of this. The government has never thought of establishing agricultural zones which is a

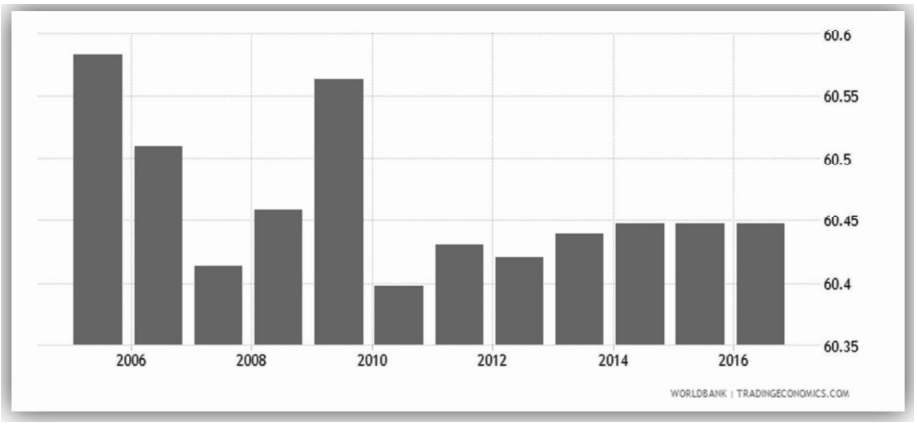


Fig. Bar chart representing the
Source: World Bank tradingeconomics.com

need of the hour. The government needs to invest their time & money to establish agricultural zones along with special economic zones.

Agrarian Distress and Farmer's Suicide

According to the latest data of the crime bureau of India says that, since 1995 total of 296,438 Indian farmers had committed suicide, over these 60000 were from Maharashtra and remaining were from Odisha, Andhra

[10]Gogoi, Angarika and Tripathi, Bhasker (2019), 42% India's Land Area Under Drought, Worsening Farm Distress In election Year, available at URL: https://www.indiaspend.com/42-indias-land-area-under-drought-worsening-farm-distress-in-election-year/

[11]<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmers%27_suicides_in_India>

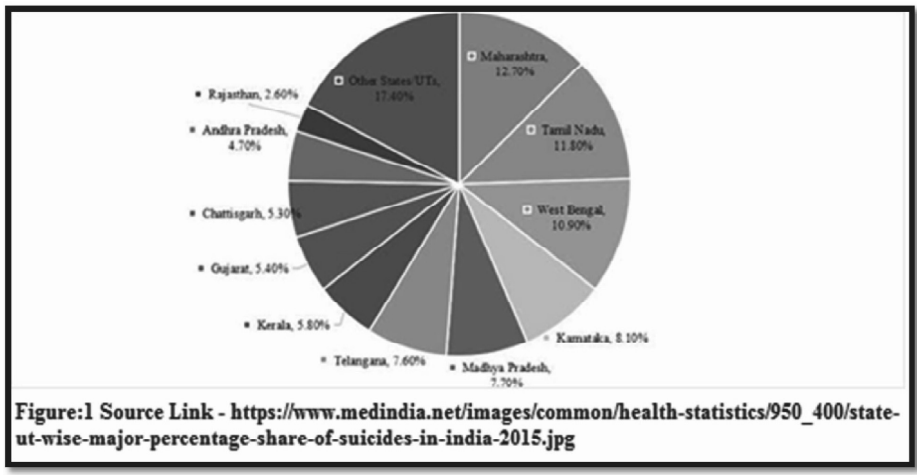
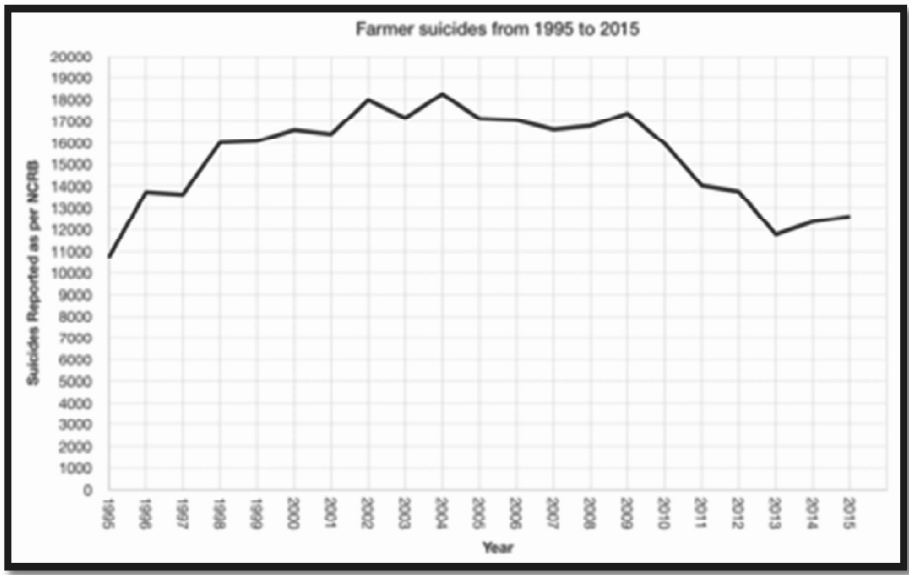


Fig. 1: This figure is depicting the regional variation in farmer's suicide. This suicide takes place in the high-risk agriculture area, where there is a lack of proper irrigation facility and farmers are largely dependent on the climatic situation.

Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Gujrat. Each year, around 15000 farmers kill their own lives.[11] All these farmers usually belong to the age group of 30-60. Farmer's suicides are related to multiple issues.

Another important thing observed that farmer's suicide in India has regional variation. High risk, the dependency of climate for irrigation facilities, high debt burdens, poor government policies, failure to get access to government subsidies because of a corrupt system, mental health, and personal issues. After the 1990's government investment in agriculture has gone down. This led to a burden on farmers, and they are forced to take loans at a high interest rate. Failure to meet the expectations of having crop production at a large scale is also a major cause of why farmers give up their lives. These high risks, high debt, and affect their mental as well as a financial condition that needs to heal to put the stoppage on farmers' suicide. Also, the global age turned agricultural into agro-business. Also, Indian farmers started adopting the Mckinsey model of development propounded by the World Bank. This kind of model created space for industry within the agriculture sector including commercial crops and technological

[12] World bank, Approach Paper, Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Targeted Support for Small and Medium Enterprises, 2013 &Lucid chart Content Team, What Is the McKinsey 7s Model? (2019).



Link - https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/da/Farmer_suicide.png/400px-Farmer_suicide.png

Fig 2. This graph is making us very clear about, how farmers' suicide is rapidly increasing because of the economic reforms adopted by the Indian government. This graph portraying, how with every upcoming year farmers' suicide is increasing at an alarming rate. There is a need of the hour to take crucial steps and do studies on the current cause of this and need to stop this.

involvement. This model has also put major harm to Indian farmers. [12]Usually, farmers who commit suicide belong to small and marginal sections.

Large sections of farmers in India are dependent on rainfall for irrigation facilities. And scattering and low rainfall hurt their expectations which lead to the failure of their crop production. Policymakers need to review their policies so that they can meet the present requirement and try to find better alternatives for irrigation facilities.

Case study

Being one of the largest states of India, Maharashtra has a high contribution to India's economic growth rate. Maharashtra's contribution is not just limited to the agrarian but industrial sector, corporate and service sector also has a core space in India's GDP. Being one of the crucial feeders of millions of Indians, Currently, it is the most disturb state because of the continuous negative implications of globalization policy especially on the

agriculture sector. Mostly studies & Reports states that every 30 minutes witnesses the suicide of a farmer in India," (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2011). Trying to integrate the economy & compete with the western world is a major factor that leads to the decline of the agriculture of this state. As we can observe, after the 1990s this decline in the agriculture sector took their speed. Land fertility, drought, irrigation facility, budget, govt, schemes, agricultural subsidies and are factors apart from this. Mostly research and studies blame globalization for agrarian distress of Maharashtra whereas many capitalists believes that globalization has improved Indian agriculture. Vidharbha is one of the most affected regions that is facing rapid growth in farmers' suicide. The state has 24 percent of the drought-prone area of the country. However, well-irrigation accounts for 65 percent of the State's gross irrigated area. Government policy is trying to bring a technological revolution to overcome the current distress in Maharashtra. Despite heavy investments in and various dams' projects, Maharashtra still needs extra attention to tackle all these implications.

Punjab -Fortunately, Punjab is one of the richest states in the agricultural sector. It is also seen as a well-equipped, well-irrigated and proper planned strategy to handle the decline in agrarian conditions. Most farmers of this state belong to rich backgrounds and do not necessarily need government support. But still, the Punjab government is concerned about their farmers and their agrarian production. This state is one of the most benefited states of the green revolution. Undoubtedly it has a major contribution to the growth of the Indian economy. The state is also known as the rice bowl of India. Another factor that contributes to the development of the agricultural sector is because Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana contributes a lot in developing techniques and new seed varieties. But here also we can observe decline after the 1990s but in crop yields and this happening because of cut in budget and excessive use of pesticides & use of fertilizers which resulted in poor soil quality. But still even after a decline in government support somehow Punjab's farmers manage to proceed with their farming business and satisfied with this. However, from time to time the state government also comes up with profitable policies to remove

hurdles.

Even after the largest number of dams in Maharashtra, the state still faces 27 percent drought areas, whereas Punjab is still well maintained. Exclusive govt policy and schemes and their direct benefit to farmers have undoubtedly made them happy about their farming occupation whereas on the other side Maharashtra farmers want to give up from their farming occupation. Less budget and govt policy and not access to government mechanisms are some of the crucial changes that came after globalization. Various policy changes and cuts in the budget in Maharashtra is the responsible factor for states agrarian distress whereas enhancing farming occupation as this is getting international markets to export is the crucial reason of rapid growth of Punjab agricultural growth. The Indian government needs to enhance its focus and concern on these deprived states similar to Maharastra and try to raise their concern and challenges in an international forum. Compared to southern states, the northern states of India have the direct benefit of government policy. This is because of the variation in inaccessibility.

Contemporary Government Schemes

The farming and agricultural practices being the backbone of the largest source of livelihood of millions of people in the country and a major source of supply of food for the population are now in the verge of extreme poverty as per an estimate 1 out of every 3rd farmer are in the category of BPL, despite of the multiple mechanism developed by the government for increasing of land holdings, bringing credit availability, crop insurance mechanism, etc. As a result, govt reform measures the current govt. The election has announced the policy of doubling the farmer's income by 2022 and announced the scheme of PM Kisan Yojna without having any proper assessment on the actual ground reality of the farmer, the govt. aim of direct income transfer to provide immediate relief to the farming community without any form of policy analysis being done on the actual crisis prevailing in the farming sector. The govt. has been trying to provide immediate relief to the farming via initiating the policy of farm loan waiver in the current

day crisis which has usually had access to big farmers only, affecting the livelihood of the small and marginal farmer. The heavy inflationary prices of the economy which is on the verge of deriving stagflation coupled with the rising nonperforming assets of banks increasing the huge budgetary deficit in the economy can be termed as 'Good politics but bad economics'.

The govt has launched a committee headed by Ashok Dilwai, to work on formulating a plan of bringing farmer income by a double by the year of 2022, the focus was not initiated for release of proper data on the public domain for critical scrutiny before announcing doubling income of the farmer, the reluctance of the govt. to release the data of Central stats. Organization (CSO) has affected the policy paralysis for the govt due to lack of any ground situation reality of farmers. The overview of central govt. launched P.M KISAN scheme with the scheme of Telangana and Orissa for the farmer.

P.M Kisan Yojna has offered a cash transfer of 6000 per annum in 3 instalments to the farmers which is below the production cost per hectare of farming production whereas, the Telangana Rhytu Bandhu has granted the provision of cash incentive of 8000 for Kharif and Rabi crops both for every acre of land areas with the focus on the attention on the coverage of the land size of a small and marginal farmer as well, there has also been a state-level disparity in the allocation of fund in the P.M Kisan Yojna as some states show negligible income fund transfer while some states have an excess transfer of fund in states of Gujrat, U.P, etc. The P.M Kisan Yojna has also failed to incorporate the crop insurance mechanism in the allocation of farmer revenue. The Orissa scheme of KALIA is more justificatory in terms of allocation of funds for farmers with an aid of 5000 per farmer.

Conclusion

We can conclude that globalization has not proved a valuable enterprise in India compared to other countries, especially in the agricultural sector. It has a harsh effect on the farmers and their occupations. Indian farmers are facing challenges such as low-cost budget, less crop yield production, lack of well managed and latest techniques and equipment and also large

numbers of Indian farmers are dependent on environmental factors with no alternative. Less government support and a decline in farmers' subsidies after the 1990s is a major drawback in India's farming business. These all resulted in low production & growth of farmers' suicide from various regions of India. Policies such as PM Kisan Yojna, BPL - food security scheme and Orissa's Kalia scheme are still unable to meet today's requirement of Indian farmers and also not able to give them direct benefit. This rapid decline in productivity and distress of agrarian attracted many scholars and researchers to find out the main cause. Most of the studies are still going on and many researchers and policymakers still lack effective policies to once again take the Indian agriculture condition back on track. Now, the government started taking this distress seriously. Recently in February 2020 Indian finance minister showed her concern towards Indian farmers and their conditions and released an increase of 2.9% in the budget allocation of the farming department. But it is impossible to reach the goal of doubling farmer's income by 2022 with this much increment in farming budget allocation, with the current status as the agriculture is barely growing less than 5 percent, which must grow at an average rate of 10 percent annually. Therefore, governmental intervention is necessary for the form of subsidies, procurements, MSP, minimum income support system s initiated via the PM Kisan Yojna of 6000 /per annum and other model schemes of the state government.

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CHAPTER 3

Combating Farmer Suicides in India: An analysis of Government Programs and Policies

Shreya Jain

Abstract

Agriculture is not only the economic backbone of an agrarian states like Jharkhand, Punjab, Haryana etc. it is also an essential element of the nation to make growth more comprehensive. However, despite years of experimentation, plan, programs and strategies, the state of agriculture in India has remained at a very unfathomable stage of development. According to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development one farmer commits suicide every half n hour in India between 1997-2005. Crop failure resulting in fall in income is said to be the prominent reason behind the death of farmers in India. Several programs and schemes have been launched by the Central and State governments to address and combat the issue of farmer suicides in India. The recent programs include the Prime Minister Rehabilitation Package (PMRP), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY). Some other notable programs launched by Central Government for improving the income of farmers are Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), and National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture etc. Maharashtra reported the most

farmer suicides (2550 per 1000) followed by Karnataka (1212), Telangana (632), Madhya Pradesh (599) and Chattisgarh (585). Lack of irrigation facility and dependence of agriculture mainly on rainfall is the main factor behind the low agricultural productivity in India. Stressed and burdened by indebtness, successive crop failures and low yields ended the lives of thousands of farmers. In spite of superfluity of programs being implemented by the states for development of agriculture, it still pines away with a very poor rate of growth in the country. Thus, in this chapter I will discuss some of the major programs run by the Central and some of the State Governments (Maharshtra, Karnataka, Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh) to avert agrarian distress and farmers' suicide.

Keywords: Agriculture, Farmers, Suicides, Programs and Policies, Central and State Government

Introduction

Since ancient times Indian economy is mostly dependent on agriculture. Even in present time livelihood of 58 percent of India's population is dependent on Agriculture. Rice, milk, sugar cane and wheat are few of the crops with high yielding outputs. Green revolution started in 1965 to introduce High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds in Indian agriculture to resolve low production rate with using high quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Though, the green revolution led to an increase in higher productivity factor with the use of modern technologies and HYV seeds. Most of the Indian states did not get such benefits however Punjab and Haryana enjoyed a lot benefit through green revolution. In recent times, people are facing various health issues problems due to degraded quality of soil due to use of chemicals and pesticides. The introduction of new economic policy and liberalization mostly benefited the industrial and service sector but the large numbers of small and marginal farmers were not benefitted. Farmer's dependence on monsoon has become another hurdle immediate after the impact of liberalization, privatization and globalization in agriculture sector.

Consequently, crisis in agriculture sector aroused in all aspect affected

farmers economically, socially and psychologically. Lack of government policies, lack of rehabilitation process after monsoon failure (draught and flood), lack of financial help, unable to compete foreign imports, lack of subsidies on seed, fertilizer and accessible market were not provided by the government which forced farmers to commit suicide as it gave permanent relief from distress.

Farmer suicides have become a major concern in India questioning the quality of life of our farmers. Farmer suicides accounted approximately 7.7% of all suicides in India. Farmer suicide in India has seen a marginal decline with 10,349 farmers and agricultural labourers committing suicide in 2018 when compared to 10,655 deaths in the previous year.[1] National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) further reveals that in 2018, around 5,763 farmers/cultivators and 4,586 agricultural labourers committed suicide. The suicide rate in the deeply stressed agrarian sector accounted for 7.7% of the total 134,516 suicides in the country.

It has also been noticed that, out of 5,763 farmer/cultivator suicides in 2018 around 5,457 were male and 306 were female. Out of 4,586 suicides committed by agricultural labourers in 2018, around 4,071 were male and 515 were female. Agriculture Ministry has increased the budget to Rs 2,11,694 crores during 2014-19, to develop and implement schemes which aims at improving the farmer's situation in the country.

The adverse impact of new agriculture policy has been seen on the irrigation extension, prices of seed, fertilizer and pesticide. And other factors such as bankruptcy or debt, family problems, illness and drugs were recognized as the reasons behind farmer suicide in India. The economic contribution of agriculture to India's GDP is merely 14 percent only. It also provides 44% of employment to the rural people. Thus, agriculture forms the backbone of the rural economy. Hence, it is essential for the government to intervene and assist in the implementation of policies and structural

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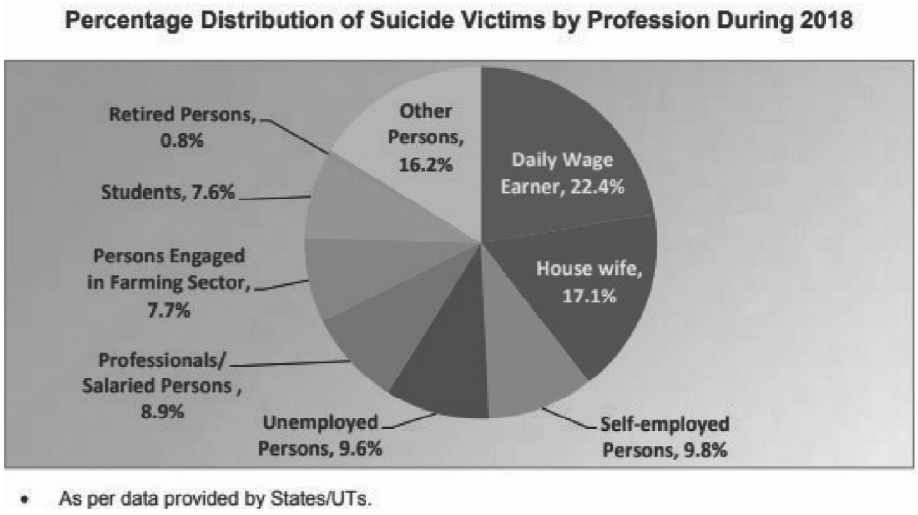
[1]Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (2018), NCRB, (Online Web) Accessed on 19th December,2019 http://ncrb.gov.in/StatPublications/ADSI/ADSI2018/chapter-2%20suicides.pdf


Percentage Distribution of Suicide Victims by Profession During 2018
Retired Persons, 0.8%
Other Persons, 16.2%
Daily Wage Earner, 22.4%
Students, 7.6%
Persons Engaged in Farming Sector, 7.7%
House wife, 17.1%
Professionals/ Salaried Persons , 8.9%
Unemployed Persons, 9.6%
Self-employed Persons, 9.8%
• As per data provided by States/UTs.

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, NCRB, 2018

reforms. This would help address some of the key challenges in agriculture.

According to National Crime Records Bureau the tendency of farmers committing suicide is alarming in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala. NCRB further reveals that some states seem to barely have a farmer suicide issue. Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal, in 2018, reported zero farmer suicides which is too good to be true[2]. West Bengal (which has a long history of farmer suicide) has reported high overall suicide rate but reported zero farmer suicide rate. On the other hand there is Punjab and Mizoram whose farmer suicide rate exceeds their overall suicide rates.

Lack of government efforts to create awareness of changing agriculture policy of India regarding international food standards among the farmers is one of the important factors of increasing distress among farmers.

Reasons behind Farmers' Suicide in India

Monsoon failure, climate change, high debt burdens, government policies, mental health, personal issues and family problems are the reasons cited

[2]Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India(2018), NCRB, (Online Web) Accessed on 19th December,2019 http://ncrb.gov.in/StatPublications/ADSI/ADSI2018/chapter2%20suicides.pdf

by many scholars for the farmers' suicides in India.

The Surge in Input Costs

Increase in the prices of agricultural inputs such as cost of chemical fertilizer, seeds, agricultural equipment, pesticides, labour costs etc increases cost productivity. Due to increases the cost of productivity, small and marginal farmers could not afford to buy these expensive agricultural inputs thus they still practice the same old traditional farming method which resulted in low production rate. If agriculture production failed due to flood, drought or monsoon they are bound to borrow loan to buy these inputs which creates an additional burden on farmers. With the increase in the labour cost (reason MGNERGA) although the socio-economic condition of the labourers might have improved but it has affected the agriculture sector adversely. Increase in input and labour cost with no increase in production of crops results in low profit. These factors culminate together and become the reason for the overall increase in the cost of cultivation. For e.g. the cost of wheat cultivating at present is three times than it was in 2005. With the low profit farmers struggle to fulfil their day to day meet, clear debts or perform any other social activity. This is one of the major causes behind the farmer's death in India.

Distressed due to loans

According to NCRB data more than 60 percent of the farmers who committed suicide had unpaid loans from local banks or moneylenders. The burden of debt and continuous pressure to repay loans from banks, money lenders make harassed and insult in the society. Dependency on of farmer on government for loan waiving schemes did not help the farmers. As government do not waive off loans completely but a certain portion. Like if a farmer is supposed to repay Rs 5 lakh to bank, government would pay certain percent of the loan amount, and remaining amount is still to be paid by the farmers. Farmers repay the remaining loan amount with borrowing from somewhere else. Also, farmers, who have got their loan waived once won't get the waiver for second time. Thus waiving off farmers loan is not the solution to this problem. Government must work

towards making agriculture a profitable occupation with minimum input cost.

Water-deficit

The increasing number of farmer suicides in the water-deficit regions like Maharashtra (72% of districts) and Karnataka (80% of the districts)[3] is a clear example of how the lack of water facility for farming have resulted in crop failure thereby failing farmers to meet production demands. This holds true in case of continued failed monsoons. Apart from crisis of water the unwillingness to cater to each other's water needs amongst the states is also one of the major problems. Irregular monsoon rise in summer temperature have seen production shortfall in the crop production. Indian agriculture is mostly dependent on monsoon. Due to climate change either flood or drought like conditions is faced by the farmer. Around 8.2 million farmers were affected by drought thus resulting in poor production in major crops like maize, soy, cotton, citrus lemon, pulses.

Lack of awareness

Ever since the beginning on the issue of farmer suicide, Government of India started implementing several farmer welfares schemes to boost up the agriculture sector and to improve their economic conditions. Therefore, new initiatives, schemes, programs and plans to benefit all the farmers have introduced by the government. With the digitization, small farmers find it difficult to access to the information hence are unable to benefit themselves from the policies and programs initiated by the governments. This is reflected in the continued unsustainable cropping practices in water-deficit regions. These schemes or programs have helped them in curbing their issues.

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[3]United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2019), "India Draught Crisis in Maharashtra and Karnataka." India. (Online Web) accessed on 20th December,2019
https://reliefweb.int/report/india/india-drought-crisis-maharashtra-and-karnataka-dg-echo-field-media-indian-government

Family Issue/ Illness

Farmers commit suicide for various other reason like family problems, illness, alcohol, property disputes etc. hence the government at times claims that death of the farmers has no direct link with deceased being a 'Farmer by Profession'.

Although there are number of socio-economic factors behind farmer suicide, the indebtedness of farmers draws special attention. Decline in farmer's earning resulting in the incapability to pay back debt prompts farmer to commit suicide. With the increase in the number of suicides rate among farmers over the last few decades, government has been initiated some programs and policies for farmers.

These are some of the schemes and policies run by the government: -

Pradhan Mantri Fasal BeemaYojna (PMFBY)

This program believes the idea of "One Nation-One Scheme theme". Pradhan Mantri Fasal Beema Yojna was launched in 2016 after scrapping earlier insurance schemes like Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS), Weather-based Crop Insurance scheme and the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS). It brings out the best features of all these previous schemes and incorporates in PMFBY. Launched on 18th February 2016 by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi this scheme is implemented in 21 states in Kharif 2016 whereas 23 states and 2 UTs have implemented the scheme in Rabi 2016-17. Although this scheme is optional for states, central government is urging the states to implement the scheme. With more area and crop coverage maximum number of farmers will be benefitted under this scheme says the government. Year 2017-2018 witnessed considerable decline in the number of beneficiaries under this scheme from previous year.[4] Reason, aadhar number being made mandatory for coverage and many farmers do not have access to aadhar card. Delayed in the settlements of claim is another reason why farmers resort to other schemes in their distress.

[4]Government of India(2018), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Press Information Bureau," Decline in number of beneficiaries under PMFBY", India

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) was launched in the year 2014-2015. It aims at making agriculture more sustainable and productive for farmers in the rain fed areas and focusing more on integrated farming, using water efficiently and mainstreaming rain fed technologies.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY)

The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) was launched on 1st July 2015 with the motto of '*Har Khet Ko Paani'*. The government has released more than Rs 65,000 crore so far for 93 prioritised irrigation projects under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) through long-term irrigation fund or LTIF, said National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) chairman Harsh Kumar Bhanwala. It has set to complete 99 major and medium projects spread across 18 states. PMKSY has been approved for implementation across the country with an outlay of Rs. 50,000 crores in five years. For 2015-16, an outlay of Rs.5300 crore has been made which includes Rs. 1800 crores for DAC; Rs. 1500 crores for DoLR; Rs. 2000 crore for MoWR (Rs. 1000 crores for AIBP; Rs. 1000 crores for PMKSY).[5]

PMKSY not only focuses on creating sources for irrigation, but also working towards harvesting rainwater at micro level through 'Jal Sanchay' and 'Jal Sinchan' Micro irrigation is to be popularized to ensure 'Per drop-More crop'. PMKSY adopts State level planning and projectized execution that allows States to draw up their own irrigation development based on District Irrigation Plans and State Irrigation Plans. Government of India is committed to accord high priority to water conservation and its management.

Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme (ADWDRS), 2008.

Agriculture debt waiver and debt relief scheme was launched by the government of India with aim to help farmer financially. It covered marginal

[5]Government of Assam (2016), Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, State Agriculture Management & Extension Training Institute, "Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojna", Assam.

and small farmers having land holdings up to 5 km with one-time settlement of loans. Farmers with land holding of more than 5 acres are categorized as 'other farmers' by local area banks. Farmers can easily free themselves from the credits and thus engage themselves and make new investments. In the year 2017-2018 waivers scheme covered 7 states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Karnataka in which government provided nearly Rs 49,000 crore in their respective budgets. State Government capital expenditure saw a depression with the increase in the share of farm waivers. Nearly 41 percent which is about Rs 2.4 lakh crore debts were waived of in 2017-18 in Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.[6]

As per reports, there have been instances where people have to avail crop loans on ownership of land, even if land is cultivated by someone else or may be left unplugged. However, most of the farmers those who were engaged in the farming were not benefitted the owner of the land enjoyed the benefits of government. But the one who took land on the lease suffers lot as one the one hand he paid money to the owner of the land but after failure of the crop again owner avail the government scheme benefit not farmer who took the land on lease.

Micro Irrigation Fund

The drip and sprinkler irrigation has gained immense popularity among Indian farmers. Due to this method additional areas of land can be irrigated with the same amount of water. This technology can also be used in the closely spaced crops like rice, wheat, onion, potato, etc. It also controls the ground and surface water pollution. The government recently approved Rs. 5000 crores through NABARD with the objective of undertaking more land area under micro-irrigation so as to boost agriculture production and

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[6]Paliath, Shrihari (2019), "Loan Waiver Encourages Defaults, Re Examine Farm Subsidy, Credit:RBI", (Online Web) Accessed on 21st December,2019. htt ps:// www.indiaspend.com/loan-waivers-encourage-defaults-re-examine-farm-subsidy-credit-rbi/

[7]Livemint(2018), "Government okays Rs,5crore micro irrigation fund" (online web) accessed on 21st December,2019 https://www.livemint.com/Politics/9brWZjV3PwpggKs8tk1JhP/Govt-okays-Rs5000-crore-microirrigation-fund.html

farmer income[7]. Fund has been set up under NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) i.e. NABARD offered this amount in the form of loan to the state government to be repaid within 7 years. Under the scheme Rs. 2000 crores were utilized during 2018-2019 and the rest Rs. 3000 crores will be utilized during the year 2019-2020. NABARD works for providing a specific amount to states on conceding rate of interest (as lowest as 3%) to promote micro-irrigation. Its objective is to facilitate the States in mobilizing the resources to have maximum coverage of micro irrigation. It currently has coverage of only 10 million hectares as against the potential of 70 million hectares[8].Small or big farmer who wishes to install micro irrigation system in their farm irrespective of size can benefit themselves with the scheme.

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)

To promote organic farming in the country, state like Sikkim has changed its farming technique to organic farming./ The objective behind is to improve soil health and organic matter content so that the productivity of the crop also increases thus farmers have an increment in their bet income. This scheme targets to cover an area of 5 lakh acre of land. This land is in 10,000 clusters of 50 acre each, for the year 2015-16 to 2017-18[9].

National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)

National Agriculture Market is the online trading platform for agriculture commodities, aims to create a unified e-national market for farm. It has a single window service for all APMC (Agriculture Produce Market Committee) markets which provides all the information like commodity arrivals, buy and sell trade offers and other activities. The government has planned to link 22,000 mandis (market) spread across the countries under

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[8]Liveemint(2018), "Government okays Rs,5crore micro irrigation fund" (online web) accessed on 21st December,2019 https://www.livemint.com/Politics/9brWZjV3PwpggKs8tk1JhP/Govt-okays-Rs5000-crore-microirrigation-fund.html

[9]Government of India(2018), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Press Information Bureau ,"Farmer Welfare Schemes", India https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=168559

e-NAM. Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh in the conference organized by Crop Care Federation of India said that "Around 585 mandis across India has been linked at first place and we are planning to link 22,000 with e-NAM by Financial Year 2022".[10] Several schemes and programs are being implemented by the government to develop the agriculture sector and improve the economic condition of farmers. e-NAM aims at reducing the cost of production, reduce wastage, ensuring alternate source of income of farmers, ensuring best price for farmers' production. The minister said if the government, the industry and farmers team up together they can face and overcome many challenges in the field of agriculture. e-NAM ensures better prices to the farmers with the concept of 'One Nation One Market'. This brings in transparency which enables farmers to get improved remuneration for their production./

Soil Health Card Scheme

Launched in the Fiscal year 2014-2015 by Narendra Modi with the aim to address the poor nutrient value of soil has started reaping fruits. With the application of soil health card scheme, there has been decline in the use of fertilizer by 10 percent and the raise in productivity by 5-6 percent. Around 11.69 crores Soil Health Cards has been given to the farmers in the last two respective years (2017-2019) and 13.53 lakh during 2019-2020. This has helped farmers understand their soil quality and take necessary measures to improve its quality and nutrient value. To assess the soil quality, soil health laboratories has been sanctioned under soil health card scheme. Around 429 static lab, 102 new mobile labs, 8752 mini lab, 1562 village level labs and 800 existing labs are being sanctioned under the scheme. Costs of lab is approximately 5 lakhs; 75 percent cost will be funded by both state and central government. Government allocated

[10]News18.com (2019), "Govt plans to link all mandis with E-Nam platform by 2022." (Online web) accessed on 19th December,2019 https://www.news18.com/news/business/govt-plans-to-link-all-mandis-with-e-nam-platform-by-20222011751. html#:~:text=%22 Already%20585% 20mandis% 20are% 20linked,prime%20minister%2C%22%20Singh%20said.

[11]Revolvy (2019), "Soil Health Card Scheme", (Online Web) Accessed on 19th December,2019 https://www.revolvy.com/page/Soil-Health-Card-Scheme

an amount of ₹ 568 crore (US$82 million) for the scheme. In 2016, under Union budget of India, government allocated ₹ 100 crore (US$14 million) to states for making soil health cards and set up labs[11]. Soil Health Card Scheme is beneficial scheme for farmers who do not know which type of crops to grow to get maximum yield. They hardly know about the quality and the type of soil they are working on. Although with experience they know what crops will grow and what will fail. But they don't know what they can do to improve the condition of the soil.

Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package (PMRP)

Launched in September 2006, it was implemented by the respective state governments through the state level coordination, panchayati raj institution and community based organization. The package aims to introduce sustainable farming and to waive off debts of farmers for their decent livelihood. The package included measures aimed to palliate distress of farmers. It covered 31 districts of 4 states which includes 16 districts in Andhra Pradesh, 06 in Maharashtra, 06 in Karnataka and 03 in Kerala were covered under this scheme.[12] Primary objective is to provide complete institutional credit coverage; crop centric approach to agriculture; assured irrigation facility; effective watershed management; better extension and farming support system; and lastly improved marketing facilities and subsidiary income opportunities through horticulture, livestock, dairying and fisheries. The entire package involved Rs.16978.69 crores, 62.31 percent of was apportioned for subsidy/grants and the remaining 37.69% for loans.[13] This entire amount was proposed to be utilized in these four

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[12]Thippaiah, P, BhendeM.J.(2010), " An Evaluation Study of Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package for Farmers in Suicide Prone Districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra" (Online Web) Accessed on 19th December,2019. http://www.isec.ac.in/22%20An% 20Eval% 20Stdy%20of%20 PMRP%20for%20 Far%20in% 20Sui%20Pron%20Dt%20of%20AP%20Kar%20Ker%20&%20Mah.pdf

[13]Livemint (2017), "How will Farm Loan Waivers impact the Indian Economy" (Online Web) Accessed on 20th December, 2019. https://www.livemint.com/Politics/HcS9M9n9rus7h5JiLQC2ZM/How-will-farm-loan-waivers-impact-the-Indian-economy.html

states covering 31 districts. The districts with higher number of farmers' suicide were benefited with the scheme.

States Initiatives to address agrarian distress and Farmer's suicide

Maharashtra

Farmer suicide is complex and complicated issue in Maharashtra. Maharashtra is one of the states facing issue of suicide among farming community. According to NCRB Maharashtra has witnessed around 3,594 farmer's death in the year 2018[14]. Maharashtra government had passed Money lending Regulation Act, 2008 to regulate all private money lending to farmers. But it did not help farmers from their distress. As many as 300 farmers committed suicide in the month of November, 2019 due to unseasonal weather conditions rain washed off almost 70 percent of the kharif crops. Though the government took the decision to waive off loans up to 2 lakhs to the farmers it failed to keep its promise made during the elections[15]. Farmer approached to Uddhav Thackrey, Chief Minister of Maharashtra elabourating plight of farmers, but still waiting for the positive response. Government has not been coming up with concrete steps to address the plight of farmers. The state and parties are wooing their voters by promising a better future, self-appraising and demonizing their rival but not working for farmers.

Karnataka

[14]The Times of India (2020), "Maharashtra has more farmer suicides with 3594 cases" (Online Web) Accessed on 12th January, 2020.
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-had-most-farmer-suicides-with-3594 cases/articleshow/73182667.cms#:~:text=The %20 state %20 recorded % 203%2C594%20 of, Deaths%20 and %20 Suicides %20 in % 20 India. &text=Also%2C%201%2C355%20of%204%2C586% 20 suicides, labourers % 20 were % 20 from%20the%20state.

[15] The Economic Times (2019), "Mahrashtra CM Annouces Loan Waiver upto Rs 2 lakh for Farmers." (Online Web) Accessed on 20th December 2019 https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mahara shtra-cm-announces -loan-waiver-upto-rs-2-lakh-for-farmers/articleshow/72915892. cms?from=mdr

[16] East Coast Daily (2019), "Karnataka had the highest farmer suicide in 201 from south India: NCRB" (Online Web) Accessed on 18th December, 2019 https://www.eastcoastdaily.in/2020/01/11/karnataka-had-the-highest-farmer-suicides-in2018-from-south-india-ncrb.html#:~:text= With %20 2%2 C405%20 (2232%20 male %20 and, NCRB) %20 data%20released%20on%20Thursday.

With 2,405 deaths in 2018, Karnataka has recorded the highest number of farmer suicides in the south while being the second highest in India[16]. There has been a lot of distress among farmers with the delayed monsoon. Karnataka has been struggling with the poor monsoon since past two decades. Also, the unseasonal rainfall (especially during post sowing period) has affected over 10 lakh hectares. Earlier during 2003-04 government paid the compensation of Rs. 1 lakh to families of farmers who committed suicide. Later the compensation amount was increased to RS 2 lakhs per victim household which was further revised to rupees five lakhs in October 2015.[17]. The compensation was given to farmers who committed suicide due to farming factors. Compensation of Rupees 5 lakh (2 lakh previously) has been distributed to the victim households amounting to Rs.39.20 crores for the entire state.[18]It is to be noticed that the decision regarding the allotment of compensation were pending for many of the farmers and many of the plea was rejected on the grounds that death was not due to farming reason. This pending of application and rejection of loan waive off has made farmers to commit suicides.

Chhattisgarh

As many as 1,344 farmers committed suicide in Chhattisgarh during the last two-and-a-half year. In Chhattisgarh Assembly, state Home Minister Ramsewak Paikra said, "A total of 14,705 suicide cases have been registered between 2015–16 financial years. Of them, 1,344 were farmers and 13,361 others". "13 people committed suicide due to financial crisis while 19 took the extreme step because of the debt burden," the minister said. "The state government provided compensation to the tune of Rs 16,35,924 to kin of the 25 deceased,". According to the records, 224

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[17] Te Economic Times (2017), "3515 Karnataka Farmers committed suicide in 5 years." (Online Web) Accessed on 19th December 2019 https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/3515-karnataka-farmers-committed-suicide-in-five-years/articleshow/62264877.cms?from=mdr

[18]The Hndu (2015), "Farm Suicides: Compensation In creased to Rs 5 lakh" (Online Web) Accessed on 18th December, 2019 https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/farm-suicides-compensation-increased-to-rs-5-lakh/article7886343.ece

farmers committed suicide in Surajpur district during this period followed by Balodabazar (210), Balod (165), Mahasamund (134), Bilaspur (85), Balrampur (70), Mungeli (77) and Gariaband (65).[19] Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel presented the first budget of his government in the Legislative Assembly. It focused on providing farm loan waiver and rebate in electricity bills for farmers in distress.

The Congress government had announced a farm loan waiver immediately after coming to power in December 2018. The aim of the government was "Bahujan Hitay, Bahujan Sukhay" (for the happiness and benefit of the largest number of people) Baghel also said in his speech. The financial plan for 2019-20 saw 1.5 times increase in the budget than the previous year therefore has an allocation of Rs 21,597 crores for agriculture and allied sectors. Rs 4,000 crore (short term agricultural loans) distributed by public sector banks along with those distributed by rural and co-operative banks will also be waived off by the government. Around Rs 50 crore has been announced for the establishment of five food-parks, which would increase farmers' income and generate employment, particularly in rural areas. Power bills will be cut to half with effected from March 1, 2019. Rebate on power bills benefitted and extended to all consumers in the domestic sector for up to 400 units. A provision of Rs 400 crore has been made for extending this concession.[20] Although government promises to improve the life of farmers with these schemes and policies only time will tell how much it is implemented and is a success in reality.

Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh CM while admitting to "delay and difficulties" in delivering the poll promise of farm loan waiver has appealed to farmers in the state

[19]The Hindu Business Line (2017), "1344 farmers commit suicide in Chhattisgarh in 2.5 years: Minister." (Online Web) Accessed on 20th December, 2019https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/1344-farmers-commit-suicide-in-chhattisgarh-in-25-years-minister/article9998824.ece

[20]Business Standard (2019), "C'garh budget provides for loan waiver, power bill rebate." (Online Web) Accessed on 20th December 2019 https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/c-garh-budget-provides-for-loan-waiver-power-bill-rebate-119020801185_1.html

to be patient. He has further requested to not desist from renewing their loan accounts with banks for the current year. CM Kamal Nath in an open letter to farmers said Rs 7000 crore worth loans of over 20 lakh farmers in the state had been waived off so far. "I can understand the worry of the farmers who have been waiting for their loans to be waived off". I appeal to you to keep patience. There are some difficulties emerging in the loan waiver process that had led to the delay. Nath said in his open letter, "we will fulfill our promise of loan waiver of up to Rs 2 lakh for all farmers"[21].

So far, the state government has waived off bad loans (NPAs) of up to Rs 2 lakh and up to Rs 50,000 for active loans. It was done in Phase 1 for the neediest farmers. Scrutiny of 48 lakh applications received from 37 lakh farmers for loan waiver showed how some farmers took loans from multiple banks on the same piece of land. Thus, this needs to be scrutinized with all the banks as the government would waive only one such loan per farmer. "Hence loans taken from the co-operative banks and regional rural banks will be waived off in the second phase," Nath said. Priority shall be given to waiving loans taken firstly from co-operative banks, secondly regional rural banks and lastly nationalized banks. CM Kamal Nathon Friday announced the second phase of farm loan waiver in the state which will benefit more than 12 lakh farmers by writing off debts of Rs 11,675 crore. The government claims that in the first phase, more than 20 lakh farmers were benefited with a loan waiver of Rs 7,154 crore[22].

Although the government claimed to have worked for farmers and waived off their loans, the opposition has its own views. Opposition party demands for third party to understand the situation as who is getting benefited and by how much. In this view the opposition party's spokesperson in Madhya

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[21]Sharma, Aman (2019)," Kamal Nath admits to delay and difficulties in farm loan waiver" online web accessed on 18th December,2019 https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/kamal-nath-admits-to-delay-in-farm-loan-waiver/articleshow/70813347.cms?from=mdr

[22]Hindustan Times (2019), "Second round of farm loan waiver to cost MP Government over Rs 11000cr" online web accessed on 18th December, 2019 https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/second-round-of-farm-loan-waiver-to-cost-mp-govt-over-rs-11000-cr/story-GIuY3bo4AcqGuvUYrcyTWK.html

Pradesh said that, "the 2nd phase of the loan waiver will be like the first phase which means the farmers would hardly be benefited. If the state government has really waived loans in the first phase it should go for a third party verification of the same and the situation will be much clear as to who of the farmers were benefited and how much."

Kerala Farmers

After introducing Kerala Farmer Debt Relief Commission Act, 2006, it has seen been noticed that the farmer suicide rate declined. This act came into force in 2012 aiming to provide to all distressed farmers through waiving off loans. A sum of Rs. 62.4 crores had been disbursed out of Rs 220 crores allocated by the Government for farmers' debt relief from 2006 to 2011. Further the state's debt relief commission had provided relief to all indebted farmers. It has also doubled the procurement price in a period of five years. In 2008, around 11,000 hectares of agricultural land was destroyed in flood. It caused severe crop failure which made farmers suffer huge losses and hence they were unable to repay the loans. Government of Kerala declared suspension on loans disbursed till October 2019, in view of the flood[23] There are several incidents where ended their life. With this fact its easy measures that government benefits have not reached to all group of farmers.

Tamil Nadu

In the year 2012-13, Tamil Nadu faced a severe drought in all the districts except Chennai. Government of Tamil Nadu had compensated the affected farmers at the rate of Rs.15,000 per acre including cost of cultivation. State also announced a compensation of Rs.3 lakh per victim households.[24] Again in 2014-15, around Rs.5700 crores allocated to wave the loan,

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[23]Holland Will (2018), "Kerala flooding: Agricultural impacts and environmental degradation" (Online Web) Accessed on 21st December, 2019 https://blog.cabi.org/2018/09/26/kerala-flooding-agricultural-impacts-and-environmental-degradation/

[24]Huffpost (2017)," 30 Farmers Committed Suicide across Tamil Nadu in 2016-2017, State Government says SC." (Online Web) Accessed on 20th December,2019 https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/04/28/30-farmers-committed-suicide-across-tamil-nadu-in-2016-17-state_a_22060069/

covered marginal and small farmers. Most of these farmers were who had taken short and medium-term crop loan from cooperative banks. Nearly, 8.5 lakh farmers were benefited with this initiative. In total, Rs.20,000 crore was distributed in terms of crop loan to the farmers from cooperative banks in between 2011-16. In 2016, government had also distributed Rs.6000 crore through cooperative society as compensation.

Suggestions by Agro Economic Research Centre to combat Farmer Suicides

- License must be made by the government to regulate the informal credit market and also fix the interest rate and terms of lending money. Radhakrishna Committee recommendations (2007) underline the need for mitigating the burden of farmers' indebtedness to money lenders. This must be taken into consideration.
- To meet social consumption needs of farmers, every state must establish Farmers' Welfare Fund/ Farmers' Welfare Department. The Central and State Government along with NABARD should contribute in the same for the betterment of farmers. Prime Ministers Rehabilitation Package must also be reintroduced in the suicide prone states only after punching away the loopholes which were there previously.
- Various effective water saving techniques in cultivation must be informed or made aware about to the farmers like drip irrigation and protective cultivation as many states face a lack of water and is also a major issue of concern for farmers.
- Financial revival of banks that are on the verge of bankruptcy and are not functioning is a must. It would help to eliminate the illegal money lenders from remote rural areas. NABARD is one such organization which can provide the financial help to such cooperative banks.
- A Compassionate Distress Consulting Officer must be appointed at the Department of Agriculture. It aims to finance and counsel the small ventures in the villages integrating with the other employment generating departments and agencies spread all over the states. It should also fo-

cus on encouraging farmers to start livestock activities like dairy, poultry, fisheries.

- Illness has also been a major reason behind farmer suicides in India. Illness increases the expenditure of the family. Farmer with low income could not afford to treat their illness hence they prefer to end their lives. Approximately, 17% of 528 victim households mentioned illness as cause of suicide. Vulnerable farmers must be given primary health care and strong support system. The victim households of Madhya Pradesh highlighted the lack of access to mental health services in rural areas. Therefore, rehabilitation centre should be established as the indebted farmers seek solace in drugs and alcohol thus trying to escape the burden of debt.
- Health insurance programs (covering both government and private hospital) for the farmers must be enhanced. A scheme similar to Employees State Insurance (for industrial workers), called "Farmers' State Insurance Scheme (FSIS)" must be initiated for farmers so that they can seek medical treatment from the hospitals covering the scheme Employees State Insurance.
- Shortage of rainwater, attack of pest and disease leading to crop loss was one of the reasons behind farmer suicides across different states. Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana and West Bengal were mostly affected. Installation of automated weather stations are must so that farmers are alerted on natural calamities and hence can take precautionary measures. Although Crop Pest Surveillance Project (CROPSAP) launched by the Government of Maharashtra during 2009-10, was not a huge success but with further refinement and proper measures in implementation can aid the farmers in suicide prone states.
- Priority must be given to completion of irrigation projects, de-siltation of community tanks, constructing large tanks for storing water and to ensure water availability, watersheds.
- Special training programs must be held to educate farmers about modern farming techniques and practices.

- Affordable insurance schemes must be planned, covering farmers and their crops issue faced at different stages of the crops cycle.
- Fair price for farm products must be ensured, and middlemen eliminated by creating a direct reach for the farmers to the market

Conclusion

Farmer suicide is complex issue in India. It is not only affecting the agricultural development but also the entire social environment of the community. It is not going to overcome through financial provisions by the government but through public participation thus strengthening the farming community.

Farming can be made to profitable profession if there is a combination of innovative managerial and economic policies. It is also important that food production must be done within the capacity of soil, water, forests, economic and social resources. It is the need of the hour to go beyond the narrow crop economics of minimum support price utility and towards recognizing the farm household economic nature of farming. This helps in reinventing the uniqueness of farmers as a productive class who are engaged in production of crops and food for all. It also adopts the budgetary support approach to bail out the farmers from the suicidal, debt-multiplying, production.[25]

Farmer today wants new knowledge; learn new skills and technical backstopping. Not knowing and having access to the new advance technology, judicious use of natural resources and production input results in poor production of crops thus distressing the farmers. In addition to this farmer have poor knowledge about the schemes run for them (both central and state government) which adds to their ongoing problems. Thus, it is very necessary to have proper institutional mechanisms which can meet the needs of farmers. The loan waivers schemes for farmer helped in reducing farmer suicide rate. It is also to be noticed that the loans taken is not only used for agriculture purpose but for other issues such as paying

[25]Bodh, P.C. (2019), Farmers' Suicides in India: A Policy Malignancy, Taylor and Francis Group, Abingdon, Oxon, New York.

back interest of loans. Thus, it is important to design the schemes such a way to tackle every aspect which may lead to farmer suicide.

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CHAPTER 4

Farmer Suicide in India: An Appraisal

Ranjeeta Mukherjee

Abstract

This chapter maps the topographical shapes of financial changes that are right now in progress in India that connection rank and capital, country and urban, workers and the state in differing ways. It clarifies local varieties in the development and effects of commonplace capital and how these influence examples of (crude) gathering and contends against regular Marxist deductions of the connection among private enterprise and composers. Underscoring the tenacious hugeness of political and monetary strength by areas of the working class in India, their ability to decide the nature and eventual fate of industrialist improvement in India through control of a common capital and the state is featured. Political intensity of provincial elites and a huge work power overwhelmed by casual segment labourers with determined country roots, sway both the spatial appearances of capital speculation and streams, and the idea of work procedures and relations. Enveloping areas at various phases of entrepreneur improvement, and with various rustic urban socioeconomics, the Indian social development reflects interesting class divisions and station partitions significant for understanding the particular indication of continuous financial changes and emergencies. A perception of country urban associations, cleavages and clashes is fundamental to acculturate the historical backdrop of contemporary battles of and around the common labourers in

India. A lot of recommendations are offered for speculating commonplace capital in India, over the span of talking about three between related subjects a) debates about current agrarian crisis, b) provincial capital and urban processes, and c) the socio-cultural and political implications of informality and informal labour.[1]

Jai Jawan , Jai Kisan" - Lal Bahadur Shastri-

The potential of the statement got waned up gradually over a period of time. The initial years of post-independence era, the advancement of the rural economy, development of agriculture and improvement of the farmers were the focal point of any development plan or policy in India but eventually the focus got shifted from agrarian reform to other aspects of economic development. Thus, over the time, the condition of the farmers in the country moving towards deterioration leading them to the verge of suicide. The news of farmer's suicide somewhere or other has got placed in various newspaper and other medias, very often. The economy of the country is still, to a large extent depends over the agriculture, since agribusiness and farming are the primary occupation for more than 70 percent inhabitants in our nation. The financial prosperity of our nation to a significant degree depends on prosperity of agribusiness.

Marxist Perspective

As per the clarification given by Marx it is the social edifices which is founded on financial class distinctions and the interactions of individuals amidst this social structure is the basis of law and human rights. Class divisions inside societies create dissention and disorder, which give rise to law and the concept of state emerges to manage this contention. According to Engels, "*In order that these...classes with conflicting economic interests, may not annihilate themselves and society in a useless struggle, a power becomes necessary that stands apparently above society and has the function of keeping down the conflicts and maintaining 'order.' And this power, the outgrowth of society, but*

[1]Edward P. Thompson, "The Peculiarities of the English," Socialist Register 2, 2 (1965): 357.

assuming supremacy over it and becoming more and more divorced from it, is the State."[2] The state that rises to maintain order within society perpetuates the contention as a predominant class employing control over classes with less force. Lenin explains, "*The State is an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another; its aim is the creation of 'order' which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between the classes."*[3]

According to Marxist perception, the struggle for power mainly involves two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the *Communist Manifesto,* bourgeois law was deprecated by Marx stating that it is nothing more than a reflection of the desires of that class. Speaking to the bourgeois, he says, "*our jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economic conditions of existence of your class."*[4]

Since the concept of private property is the basis of Bourgeois law and because it is based on the concept of private property, and thus laws are created that promote unequal rights. No equal right can be created in a capitalistic society as the very nature of this system is the differentiation of society between haves and have-nots. According to Cornforth , "*There cannot be equality between exploiters and exploited."*[5]

When a society is founded on unequal rights based on property and class, those with fewer rights would start protesting which further give rise to lawlessness in the society. In the word of Engels, *"The contempt for the existing social order is most conspicuous in its extreme form — that of offences against the law.*" Thus, it is the society which owe more responsibility towards lawlessness in the society than the individuals who are directly indulge in such an activity. Thus, as per Engels' perception it is

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[2]Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (Chicago, IL: Kerr, 1902), 206.

[3]V.I. Lenin, The State and Revolution (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1932), 9.

[4]Marx and Engels, Collected Works, 6:501.

[5]Maurice Cornforth, The Open Philosophy and the Open Society (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1976), 290

the bourgeois society which is compelling a criminal to lash out against the unjust work committed by such society and as such the criminals need not to feel penitence for their actions.[6] The Marxist solution to the unjust society and lawlessness is to topple the bourgeoisie, thus letting the proletariat to make the laws. Hence it is the proletariat law that could promote the interests of the average workers.

Jawitsch believes, "*Complete success in the masses' struggle for their democratic rights and liberties can only be achieved by overcoming monopoly capital's economic and political domination and establishing a state authority that expresses the interests of the working people."*[7]Thus, the state control over the resources available, eradication of concentration of economy and establishment of the state authority which can work for the interest and development of the working community, could be the only solution to the problems of the masses. The Marxists legal theory even support the breaking of law by the working class if such an action is in pursuit of equality. According to Lenin, "*The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is won and maintained by the use of violence by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, rule that is unrestricted by any laws."*[8]

When the upset of the proletariat has succeeded, the new Marxist law (socialistic law) would mirror the desires of the working individuals as opposed to those of the bourgeoisie. Law based on the desire of the proletariat will make a society that is less exploitative than that based on capitalist bourgeois law. According to Jawitsch, "*An anti-exploiter tendency is what characterizes the special features of all the principles*

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[6]Frederick Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (Moscow, USSR: Progress Publishers, 1973), 168. Cited in R.W. Makepeace, Marxist Ideology and Soviet Criminal Law (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1980), 30.

[7]Jawitsch, The General Theory of Law, 46.

[8]V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, 45 vols. (Moscow, USSR: Progress Publishers, 1981), 28:236.

[9]Ibid 8

of the law of socialist society in most concentrated form."[9]

The will of the proletariat becomes the basis for all rights, laws, and judgments, thereby negating natural law, God, or any absolute moral code. Howard Selsem explains, Marxists see law based on the will of the proletariat as flexible rather than inconsistent, a flexibility that denies a need for a comprehensive legal system. Pashukanis writes, "*We require that our legislation possess maximum elasticity. We cannot fetter ourselves by any sort of system."*[10]

According to Marxists perception, law is an outcome of class conflicts and the basis of these conflicts is basically the property, hence the need for law itself will disband once a communist society is established. Marxists accept that when classes are abolished, all individuals will make and live in a domain that promotes concordance. Crime will be almost disappearing since the facilitators for hostile social movement—injustice and disparity—will never again exist.

Again in Marx's view, as far as agricultural economy is concerned, the utilization of money- capital for the purchase of land cannot be considered as an investment of agricultural capital rather the investment made for the purchase price of land is actually a hindrance to agriculture. According to the definition, *Capitalist Ground Rent* is that part of the surplus value which is appropriated by the landlord once the labourer is paid wage at the value of the labour power and the entrepreneur, i e, the capitalist farmer, realises the average rate of profit. But in India, the labourer is paid at rates lower than the value of labour power and the average profit from the investment made, by the so-called agricultural capitalist, in the land is too lower than average. It is a hard core fact that along with the agricultural production which is a commodity freely bought and sold in the market but along with this the land also been treated as a commodity which can be freely bought and sold in the market. The rent appropriated by the landlord has assumed its new capitalised form, i e, the price of land. The rent

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[10]E.B. Pashukanis in a 1930 speech regarding the Soviet State and the Revolution of Law (Moscow).

appropriated by the landlord in Indian society basically during the British era, thus involves: (a) the pulling down the wages of the agricultural workers to a level which is less than the value of labour power; (b) the cultivators income were slashed down to a level lower than the average rate of profit; and (c) the addition of the interest on the capitalised form of Ground Rent. The tenancy reforms carried out by the British rulers in their day and the more "radical" agrarian reforms carried out post-independence, thus helped in bringing about a state of agrarian relations in India similar to what Marx pointed out as the specific feature of Ireland. In present-day India, as in Ireland of Marx's times, "landed property in the capitalist mode of production formally exists without the existence of the capitalist mode of production itself"; the landlord's rent "absorbs not merely a part of the profit or surplus labour of the labourer but also a part of his normal wage."[11]Paradoxically, 5,000 years of written history negates the likelihood of an idealistic arrangement working advocated by the Marxist hypothesis of law but still is having certain relevance to the farmer suicide in India that is occurring.

The Agrarian Situation in India: Historical Overview

Agriculture began in India about 9000 BC as a result of early cultivation of plants, and domestication of crops and animals. As agriculture got developed with new implements and techniques, life got settled. Double monsoon gave rise to the fact that two crops were grown in one year. Indian products soon reached the world via existing trading networks, and foreign crops were introduced to India. Plants and animals, which were considered essential to Indian survival, became the object of worship and worship. Farmers in India were happy. Since time immemorial land was always been a matter of concern and at the same time was a subject of research since the beginning of Renaissance. It is a profound truth that the land tenure systems prevailing in India was basically feudalistic in nature leading to the tillers of the soil to extreme tyranny. The advent of the British to India, initially was for doing business but later they become the ruler.

[11]Namboodiripad, E. M. S. (1984). The Marxist Theory of Ground Rent: Relevance to the Study of Agrarian Question in India. Social Scientist, 12(2), 3. doi:10.2307/3517091

During the early nineteenth century, land plays a pivotal role in the life of the people of India because their sustenance mostly depends on agriculture. A remarkable feature of this period was that availability of agricultural land was more than the number of cultivators to cultivate it but at the same time this was the period when the British Government through the intermediaries started extracting two-thirds of the economic rental value leading to an innate disgruntlement within the farmers as they had to pay a tribute in the form of revenue to the British government for the land, which they tilled themselves. In the meantime, the landowners started giving their land to the non-proprietors in lieu of the rent equivalent to the rate of the revenue paid by them to the government officials. Now owing to the burden of unfair revenue system the major portions of the land were got transferred to the affluent class who were better known as Mahajans. At the same time, it got very difficult for the mediocre landlords i.e., the people though were holding land as owner but were not so affluent to cope up with the demands of the British and as such their interest payments were getting carried forward till the next harvest which in return were getting escalated in leaps and bounds with passing time. Now in order to settle these dues the small and ordinary landowners started lending money from the affluent people of the society and thus, a new class in the money lenders emerges in the society. These money lenders were lending money by mortgaging the land of the borrower and gradually the farmers got alienated from their own land owing to the incapability of these farmers of repayment of the debt. Moreover, it can be said that this was the era since when commercialization of agriculture started taking place. There are certain people who are of the opinion that it is the emergence of money lending class which paved the way to a lot many of uprisings that took place in the Indian soil in and around 1857.

None of the cultivators were willing to pay their labour in the form of revenue to the British governments and therefore, they protested. Somewhere the government officials were got ousted and in some other places the officers and the government establishments were got attacked by the protestors. The reason behind happening of these incidents were that that the majority amid the farmers had refused to pay the revenue in

the form of rent but the revenue system not only originate massive protests against the British but it also created an enmity between the different classes or communities of the society. The clash which had taken place between the two communities was mainly due to the rivalry regarding the ownership of land, especially, it was really difficult for the zamindars, of various regions to accept the fact that the ownership of their lands, in fact, would be bestowed on the British government. Discontentment among the peasant class gradually led to a number of rebellions took place in various regions of the Indian sub-continent, the reason behind these rebellions were only to protest against the alienated conditions to which they were imperilled to by the British government.

Thus, it can be said that whenever the common people like farmers, labourers, workers and so on are suppressed and exploited after a while they revolt against the capitalist and thus Marxist theory comes into existence.

India remained poor overall and continued till the attainment of independence. The economic situation of the country with complex problems prevailing at the time of attainment of independence and the ideals and goals of economic justice articulated in the preamble and the directive principles of state policy have close resemblance with each other. Issues include poverty, hunger, unemployment, widespread illiteracy, industrial exploitation and exploitation of agricultural workers, unemployment, non-contact, religious conflict, concentration of wealth in some hands, low rates of economic growth, threateningly increasing rate of growth of population and much more. Therefore, the right to property cannot be isolated from the problems of poverty due to inequalities of wealth. Now come the period whereby India got freedom and since India didn't get a status of republic as an outcome of a revolt but it is a result of continuous and tedious effort of the people of India, the Constitution of India is also a result of extensive research whereby the basic problems which we were been subjected to were all been addressed. After independence, the Government of India was set up in the backdrop of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India with a notable

revelation of socio-economic change and a promise to promote the general welfare of the public. The general welfare of the masses with special emphasis over the growth and development of the vulnerable and poorest sections of the society was been assured by those who constituted the Government of India post-independence. This assurance was to be fulfilled by means of State-led policies and programmes designed to transform nation's political economy. Since Indian economy is an agrarian economy and a majority of people lived and worked in agrarian sector of the economy, the basic point which were taken into consideration were the tyranny of the tillers, re-consolidation of land and land reforms. However, there was no consensus on the exact terms on which such land reform to be carried out but under any circumstances the farmers were the focal point, as far as advancement plan of India is concerned. In the initial years of independence, the reduction of poverty and agrarian reform were the priority as Indian leaders had to concentrate on harsh realities relating to country's economy and poverty. Over the time this indifferent approach of the government started creating immense distress among the farmers.

Farmer's Suicide in India: A Concern

Agriculture is the general occupation of the Indian people. It is the main source of livelihood for the people. Nearly seventy percent of the population of our country depends on agriculture. During its recent modern history, under the rule of the British Empire, until 1947, India suffered a certain number of famines, which killed enormous numbers of people. These famines were mainly due to the weaknesses of the agricultural sector, symbolized by the low technological level, the poor infrastructures and the dependence on rainfalls of most of the 650 million farmers that India possessed at the time. One of the most important of these famines was the one which occurred in Bengal in 1943, and which has traumatized many Indians for years.

The Indian farmer, the largest surviving group of small producers in the world, is now in danger of extinction. Two thirds of the Indians depend on land to sustain their life. The earth is the most generous employer in this country of a billion that has cultivated this land for more than 5000 years.

However, as farming is delinked from the earth, the soil, the biodiversity, the climate and linked to global corporations and global markets, and the generosity of the earth is replaced by the greed of corporations, the viability of small farmers and small farms is destroyed. Farmers' suicide is one of the most tragic and dramatic signs of a survival crisis for Indian farmers. Various studies carried out in India have linked the suicidal tendencies of farmers with the agricultural crisis in general, in particular the poor harvests, the increase in input prices, the poor quality of seeds and pesticides, private loans of money, contact with the product credit market and default prices. There is a sense of insecurity due to poor harvests, asphyxiation and debt. As a result, there was an avalanche of peasant suicides in different parts of the country. Given the seriousness of the problem, the choice of this study is based on needs and is completely legitimate. Answering to many agricultural issues, and by the way opening the path that will be the one of newly independent countries of Asia and in Africa in the decolonization period, in 1956, Jawaharlal Nehru launched the well-known Green Revolution, with the aim of saving India from the poverty and underdevelopment, by developing the farming sectors through the introduction of modern industrial technologies such as fertilizers, tractors, and new types of seeds, as well as subsidies and low-interests credit policies. The Green Revolution, which was not so green in fact, nevertheless provided for an increase in the productivity of farmers, increasing their living standards, while reducing the dependence of India on food imports. In the following years, starting from the 1980s, India started to reduce the part of government-led programs, breaking with its socialist-oriented policies tradition, and launching an era of liberalization, which was almost limited, until 1991, to internal trade only. However, in 1991, following a monetary crisis, India opened its economy to the world, through the important reduction of tariffs and import quotas, foreign direct investments started to come, helping even more the different sectors of the economy, and permitting more trade, increasing the economic well-being of the country, which can be illustrated by the rapid economic growth that India

started to undergo, following the catch-up process, attaining even 9% in the years 2000. This allowed for an even faster development of the agricultural sector, with technology transfers and competition on the international market.[12] Let's see various aspects of farmer suicide in India.

There are several factors responsible for the growing number of farmer suicides in India. The land is not as productive as before, markets are failing, debt is in full swing and pests cannot be exposed. More than an economic problem, this has now assumed political and altruistic dimensions, especially since the past decade.

Issues of weather and climate

In India today, the weather is very unstable, and it is not raining at the right time. Moderate rain, which is very important for proper cultivation, is now a thing of the past and has reached its zenith. The situation is worse in Central India, which can be considered as an agricultural center of India. Climate conditions have changed over the past three years. Despite normal rains, the situation does not improve. 56% of the country relies on icy rivers for water, and in such a case, even small fluctuations can have catastrophic consequences. The uncertainty of more arid and undeviating wet conditions often leaves unrestrained destruction in its wake. The problem is compounded by the fact that over 85% of the rainfall in India is not raining on time. Dry periods can be very bad, especially in the early stages of the planting process. If there is a dry period of relapse, significant loss of impact can occur. Thanks to these conditions, these days even experienced farmers cannot afford the right time to plant and harvest their crops. The growth of pests, weeds and diseases aggravates the plight of farmers. Soil erosion is a serious problem that must be addressed.

Scales of operation

Real estate prices have reached such a level that it has become difficult for people to buy homes. In such cases, it is unrealistic for the average citizen to consider farms for cultivation. Most people who own it have inherited it

[12]Babacar Pierre SECK, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Farmers Suicides in India.

from their ancestors. Most of the time, after the death of the farmer, his land gets divided among his sons, which gives little benefit to the farmer. The reason for this is that the performance here is so low. Mostly it is only a few hectares. This leads to lower incomes, where processes such as mechanization and automation are not concerned. That is why small farmers have no choice but to depend on human labour, which unfortunately is not enough these days. Due to the rise in property prices, smallholder farmers who are not doing good work are sometimes encouraged to sell their land property and live a better life. It also means that the amount of land available for farming is decreasing, which usually affects Indian agriculture. States with high density population like Kerala, Bihar, West Bengal and Eastern Uttar Pradesh suffer from the problem of small landholdings. In these states, the average farmer has less than one hectare of cultivable land. The situation is different in states like Rajasthan and Nagaland. In states like Punjab, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, the net sown area is also higher than the national average. The gap between small farmers, large farmers or landowners and middle farmers or farmers is very large. India's inheritance law, which focuses on breaking up, is inherently problematic. Each fragmentation spends a lot of time and resources, and it is very difficult to properly cultivate such a small land, thereby reducing production. Boundary marking means that useful and fertile land is consumed in the process. In this situation, farmers can do little to improve their produce.

Lack of farm labour

Today, agricultural labour, especially casual labour, is considered as a waste and working as a casual labour in a farm is considered demeaning for an individual. Today, farmers' children are more interested in studying and finding a white-collar job. Sectors like construction and industry employs people who would otherwise engage in agriculture and people want to work in these sectors as they are more lucrative. This is also one of the reasons why urban migration has increased significantly over the past few decades. The government also introduced a minimal support price system, which led to inflation and wages. This means that small farmers do not

have enough freedom in terms of obtaining suitable agricultural labour services. They also started schemes like MGNREGA for temporary a worker, which means they are more interested in these jobs than any agricultural work. The fact is that these jobs do not require high productivity, unlike agriculture, but only encourage them. These factors have an impact on the small farmer the most.

Unsatisfactory realisation of prices

The most important issue for farmers in India is marketing. Laws in India are outdated and, often, the farmer has no choice but to sell his products in regulatory markets where the intermediary obtains the maximum benefit. Sometimes they can get up to 75% of the profits. If intermediaries can be eliminated, farmers can sell their products at a better price. On the other hand, the farmers have to be satisfied with the bare minimum. The situation is particularly difficult in sugar factories, where scales are always considered difficult, and farmers often require time to break them. In some situations, the farmers also need to give away their produce for free to the moneylenders. Distress selling in small villages is a pretty common phenomenon as well. The village credit survey correctly indicates that farmers are not profitable in terms of time, place or sale

Inadequate Storage Facilities

According to ASSOCHAM estimates, there is a shortage of 30-40% refrigerated warehouses annually for all agricultural products in India. In financial terms, it means Rs 35,000 crore. Food products such as fruits and vegetables are in high demand throughout the year. However, unusual rains have destroyed the crop. Farmers who do not have refrigerated warehouses should sell their produce as soon as possible so that they do not rot. This means that they are sold at a loss, as supply is slightly higher than demand. For a small farmer, it is very expensive - and therefore impossible - to own and manage cold storage.

Quality of seeds, pesticides, and fertilisers

Indian farmers generally have to be satisfied with low quality seeds. There are many reasons for this sad situation: ignorance of the farming, corruption

of officials, ineffective and forced laws and inadequate enforcement. The fertilizers and pesticides used are of poor quality. All these factors often lead to failure or inadequate production of crop. Often, high quality seeds are so expensive that small and medium farmers cannot afford them. In terms of fertilizers, most smallholder farmers need to use cow dung manure, which is very effective. However, this cow manure is also used as fuel, which means that there is not enough cow manure available to everyone. Chemical fertilizers are often inaccessible to poor farmers. That said, organic fertilizer is urgently needed to ensure the soil is healthy. However, it has also been observed that excessive usage of these has led to the soil being infertile and affected the quality of crops.[13]

The Role of Capitalists

Capitalists play an important role in suicide of Indian farmers. India is constantly using new technologies in agriculture. New agricultural technologies include package programs that include the use of high yielding seeds, insured irrigation, fertilizers and pesticides. As a result of this technology, agricultural production has increased significantly, called the Green Revolution,. After the Green Revolution, there is an increase of income of the farmers, but a significant portion of the total income of progressive farmers returned to agriculture for applying new inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation. Farmers need money for carrying out cultivation and at the same time to sustain life. There is a constant borrowing of farmers year after year, but they could not earn that much that the debts can be repaid as either the debts are too high or income from agriculture is not adequate enough to repay the debt.[14]Permanent links to the crisis, especially as a means to work for global capitalism, have heightened panic. Indian farmers have relied on a strategy of subsidizing goods at a price. Daily Mail reports that Indian farmers committed suicide every 30 minutes as a result of Monsanto's GMO crop. In the past decade, over 250,000 Indian farmers have committed suicide due to Monsanto's expensive seeds and pesticides. Globalization and monopoly have forced farmers to buy

[13]Samudranil, Why are Indian farmers killing themselves? Maps of India.
[14]The Hindu "the green revolution is blamed for farmers Suicide", April 19, 2006

GMO seeds, and ever since GMO crops have become pest resistant, farmers have no choice but to buy Monsanto's popular herbicide. This was one of the ways only to earn a huge amount of profit from the poor farmers by the capitalists.

Farmers' suicide is a very complex phenomenon that is largely related to the economic, social and psychological problems of the family, as well as the family. In recent years, many farmers in Punjab have experienced a rapid increase in debt, recurrent bad harvests, natural disasters, lack of alternative sources of income, shareholder exploitation, higher production costs, shipwrecks and a rapid global decline. The suicide was due to the events that followed earnings, etc. Therefore, to reduce suicides in the agricultural class, some may want to take safety measures. Crop insurance, extension services, agricultural loans, contract farming, etc. It needs to be strengthened.

Lack of Alternative Source of Income

Most of the people in the rural areas are depended upon agriculture and agriculture depends a lot on weather conditions, now if one cannot earn enough to sustain his life, then either they migrate to urban areas to work in brick kiln or construction site etc. or if they don't get any alternative source of income, commit suicide. But, apart from agriculture, there are allied fields like dairy products, poultry, mushroom cultivation, etc. which can be an alternative source of income but, unfortunately, there is lack of initiative from the government and farmers are also not so aware of these.

Change in Work Pattern

Previously the farmers used to till the soil either by themselves or with the help of the family members but now a day's mostly farming is dependent on labour hired by the farmer. They simply hire the labour and do not investigate the quality of work done by labour. This not only affects the final output but also has an adverse impact over the profit margin.

Certain solutions that can help the farmers

Awareness of Emerging Trend of Agriculture: There must be awareness amid the farmers of various aspects and emerging trends of agriculture. To

help them, it is necessary to create centers of excellence; Agricultural universities must discover new methods and technologies with scientific basis. Many Indian farmers are unaware of rotation and diversity. Although there has been significant improvement in education in urban areas, but the rural areas still have least access to the policies made by the Government for the spreading of awareness relating to innovation in cultivation and farming methodology. As a result, farmers are not fully aware of the various schemes offered by the government. They should be taught about crop rotation and crop diversity.

Crop Insurance: Insurance is needed. The need of the day is that the various provisions relating to crop insurance should be simplified. Crop insurance should be mandatory, and claims should be easily settled under the supervision of the prescribed authority. Traditional crop insurance measures payments by directly measuring farmers' losses. However, since most farmers are owner of the small holdings, it is often not possible or even costly to make a field loss assessment. The steps to obtain crop insurance also need to be instant and hassle free.

Collective Farming

Collective farming is a great option for small and marginal farmers, where a group of farmers can collectively work on large farms with collective inputs. This allows accumulation of safe storage space at the village level to reduce waste, transportation costs and market products when and where prices are attractive.

Increase in Youth Participation

Increase in youth participation on agricultural fields is economically possible only by implementing new technologies. Thus, new technologies must be encouraged to be used as it has two fold benefit, one it will improve the financial status of the cultivators and secondly youth will be encouraged to do something productive even staying in their native places. Technological advancement in agriculture should be passed down to the small farmers.

Skill Based Education

Due to excessive dependence on migrant workers and agricultural

machinery, farmers started avoiding hard manual labour. Previously farmers used to do the work in their fields by themselves and their families helped them by providing additional labour. Hence there is a need to provide competency-based training to farmers and their family members to increase their production and which will in return will help increasing their income.

Institutional Finance

Providing institutional finance to every farmer is another important decision to save farmers from the debt trap of borrowers. Where institutional funding is available, it is easily accessible to poor farmers. This requires the elimination of complicated formalities and borrowing procedures. Effective oversight of disbursed funds is also needed because in many cases the poor farmer is used as a forerunner, but in reality, the benefit is actually secured by large landowners. Due to insufficient and burdened institutional credit, farmers resort to borrowing from private non-institutional sources at a much higher percentage. It is necessary to direct efforts towards streamlining the work of joint credit infrastructure and ensuring profitable, adequate and timely flow of agricultural credit to farmers. Affordable credit lines should be provided for investment in crop and livestock production.

Effective Water Management

There must be reduction of dependency of agriculture over nature and for this effective water management during the monsoon and monsoon seasons is required. The main job of the government should be to prevent crop failure. Water management can be made more efficient through international cooperation in the area of water resources, where water can be redirected to areas where more than twelve rainwater rivers are needed. The irrigation facilities that are currently available do not cover all cultivable land. This requires effective water management during the monsoon season. The government's main task should be to prevent crop failures. In most cases, water shortages are not the cause of water shortages, but a lack of good governance by the government.

Alternate Source of Earnings

There should be encouragement for small farmers so that they could

generate alternative sources of income and the government should train farmers to acquire new skills. In drought-prone areas, the government should launch alternative employment opportunities to reduce dependence on agriculture, which is the only source of income. Another agro based small business could be the other option.[15]

Conclusion

Multiple human rights dimensions can got affected by agrarian crisis in India, it could be termed as a failure on the part of the Indian government to achieve its obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights, as required under international human rights law. The long-term effects of globalization in recent year, whether the WTO administration has on Indian agricultural products has had a negative impact on farmers' incomes. This situation is exacerbated by the reduction of farm and energy subsidies and the increase in farm costs. Whatever our congratulations on Cancun, the wealthy farmers of the United States and Western Europe continue to benefit from large subsidies and cause much trouble for their poor brothers in India. We must develop a comprehensive policy that takes into account all aspects of land reforms, rural credit systems, agricultural insurance, crop changes, employment opportunities and the roles of the Panchayati Raj institutions. The agriculture sector and rural financial institutions need to be completely reorganized so that sustainable growth could be ensured. The need of the day is to develop an all-inclusive policy whereby all the relevant aspects such as reforms in the agrarian field, rural credit system, and insurance of crops, crop rotation, employment opportunities and the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions. There is a need for the total revival and refurbishing of the farming sector and financial institutions working in the rural areas to ensure average per cent age of sustainable growth per annum for the sector. Capitalist development initially created euphoria, but with the passing of time it resulted in a massive agrarian crisis which further driving the farmers to commit suicide. Though there is reduction of number of farmers committing suicide as compared to preceding years, but no

[15]Kaur Lakhwinder, Preeti Sharma et.al.,Causes and Cure of Farmer's Suicide,Indian Journal of Economics and Development Volume 12 No. 1a: 305-310 April, 2016

one can guarantee that it will not increase nor can one assure that it will remain limited to a few states. This trend can be eliminated by the government's active involvement in solving the real problem of suicidal farmers. The solution to farmers' problems is to help them so that they can help themselves and sustain on their own, temporary compensation can never be a complete solution. The efforts should be made to improve the overall structure of the farming so that they can be taught to overcome difficulties, may it be a drought, through their own effort and capabilities. The Government needs to come up with pro- active solutions and at the same time the nation has to realize that farmer suicides are not minor issues happening in remote parts of a few states, rather it is a replication of the true state of the foundation of our economy. History says that whenever there is suppression, exploitation from the hands of the capitalist society there is a revolution and the day is not so far when the revolution will begin.

CHAPTER 5

Beyond Altruism: Economic Anthropology of Social Laws, Marginal Farmers and Suicide in Western Odisha

Debendra Biswal

Abstract

Since last few decades, the jurisprudence of the Indian state has debated farmers' suicide on statistics, epidemiology and the theoretical perspectives of Durkheim's category of altruistic suicide. Rather, it has been failed to include role of traditional social norms in stress management and obligations of kin members to each other including land. These obligations had a different legal regime than the present-day state intervened 'norms', privatization of resources and commons, and a sense of defeat has developed. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, popular discourse, and media representations, this paper has tried to bring out the critical linkages of social norms- property and suicide of the small and marginal farmers in the western districts of Odisha. On the line of Malinowski and Raymond Firth's idea of social etiology, it has critically analysed economic aspects hidden in 'social norms' in identity, the historicity of property and long run inter-community relationships among the farming communities and its break down which consequently lead to suicide of these subalterns.

Keywords: Altruistic suicide, social norms, marginal farmer, game theory

Introduction

In India, more than three lakh farmers have officially been recognised as having committed suicide during 1995-2015 (NCRB, 2015). The major reasons attributed are agrarian crisis or economic reasons; neoliberal policies (Posani, B. 2009), indebtedness, land degradation, high input costs, lack of access to water resources (Sovani and Rath, 1960),[1] small farm sizes, high dependence on monsoons for irrigation, sudden Inflation, money lending genetically modified crops (Stone, 2007). The debate on the issue of "farmer suicide" in social sciences has methodologically been divided into two major categories - statistics (Sociology and Public Health) and case studies (anthropology, psychology).[2]

The jurisprudence of the Indian state has created and accepted a comfortable dichotomy of mass (subaltern peasants) /class paradigm into its social consciousness to debate farmers' suicide, which is based on sociological studies and the statistical data provided by the National Council for Criminal Records. Firstly, the sociological study of suicide heavily relies on Durkheim's (1897) categorization of altruistic suicide, which is an expression of non-commitment to social and cultural norms; shame, social disapproval, bereavement, defeat in war or so on.[3] Secondly, the NCRB data[4] (media representation and popular discourse add to it) on farmer

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[1]Sovani and Rath (1960) cited from www.indiaresists.com

[2]Daniel Munster in 'farmers' suicides in India: Ethnographic perspectives on statistics and case histories' highlight the variations and theoretical debates on farmer suicide in India.

[3]The second type of suicide is anomic suicide, which is the characteristic of modern society. When an individual is poorly integrated into his culture and social norms, at sometime he feels that 'life has no meaning' (Smith, 1986).

[4]The governments are mostly dependent upon the National Crime Records Bureau to define the nature and causes of suicide cases in India, which assigns 26 major categories in its annual reports "Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India". This data is less relevance to identify social and economic causes of farmers' suicide for a couple of reasons. Firstly, itassigns a unique 'cause' to every suicide, but it was observed that farmers suicide cases are too complex and cannot be explained in mono-causal terms. Secondly, since these are collected by police officials, it is unable to explain the social norms, individual motivations, behavioural patterns, rules etc. within a larger socio-economic situations in which the farmer is living.

suicide are characterised by two features; assumption of a singular causality[5] to extend for identification of political responsibility and it is assumed that these suicides are explicitly political and constitute kinds of protest suicides.[6] Also, it is argued that farmer suicide is not protested suicide; rather these are public deaths/ political deaths.[7]

In addition to sociological theories, the economic analysis of the social norms and the norms created by the agricultural policies of the state provides a different picture for farmer suicides. The traditional life including economic institutions like a land of the farming communities was simple kinship based. Those obligations had created a legal regime that is juxtaposed to the idea of private property imposed by the state (Demsetz, 1967). Thus, modern economic theories are involved in correcting the tradition of underestimating informal norms. The economic analysis of social norms can be understood through two major theories; firstly, the game theory is used to define direct behaviors due to specific circumstances (Ellickson, 1991; Ullmann-Margalit, 1977 and Taylor, 1987) and secondly, the resemblance of competition between social norms and evolutionary biology (Harshleifer, 1987; Gruter and Masters, 1992).[8]

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[5]Singular causality discourses have a couple of reasons for unacceptance. firstly, they are economically reductionist. They are associated with a "sanitized" perception of the suicide victims. Secondly it is silent about the question why some people commit suicide while others in comparable economic situations don't (Ortner 1995).

[6]Anthropological works of Malinowski and Raymond Firth argues that most suicides carry with it an element of accusation and communicative act. Later on Anthony Giddes termed it a 'social aetiology'.

[7]Unlike other incidences of public suicides: farmer suicides rarely "go public" at the level of individual incidences. No one remembers the names or stories of individual suicides, there have also been no spectacular methods of suicide like self-immolation and the suicides never took place in public places or in government offices. Instead there emerges a paradoxical constellation, where the state's own bio-political enumeration produces the category that in turn poses a challenge to the legitimacy of the state.

[8]Cited in works.bepress.com

Objectives

1. To have a critical-anthropological look at the identity, historicity of property, long-run inter-community relationships and social norms of this subaltern peasant/farmer or "just an individual" who has committed suicide in western Odisha. it tries to prove that the kinship-based economic institution was having a different kind of customary legal regime which is different from the present-day state intervened 'norms', privatization of resources, and commons. The unnatural imbalance of traditional norms (as propounded by Durkheim) and the state-imposed norms have created a "sense of defeat" among the farmers (Does Durkheim propagate the idea of state intervened 'norms', privatization of resources and commons).
2. Secondly, to study the social organization of the farmers and social aetiology- an element of accusation and communicative act concerning the causal factors- distress sale of paddy, inability to pay back bank loans, crop failures, sudden inflation, expensive fertilizers and pesticides, money lending and others for farmers suicide in this belt.

Methodology

The present paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork, popular discourse and media representations to bring out the critical linkages of property-social norms and suicide of small or marginal farmers of western Odisha. History and changing nature of agricultural practices and the recent phenomenon of migration in this belt of Odisha were reviewed from the reports, media and the concerned sources.

The Media representations and popular discourse were followed to understand the issue of farmers' suicides as a social problem, Social Darwinism and the causal factors assigned to each case. The statements of the political representatives, officials like doctors, Block Development Officers, District Magistrates, interview of the farmer's family members/ neighbours, political opposition, human rights activists and others appeared in the newspaper or Local TV channels was followed up to reach the reality and to ascertain the theoretical perspectives followed to debate farmers suicides.

The qualitative data related to the events associated with suicide: life histories, socio-economic background history of the family, d it happen, when and where, family reactions, depression, role of kinship in crisis management and family aspirations was collected from 20 individual case studies.

Farmer Suicide in Odisha

In India, since last twenty years, more than three lakh farmers have committed suicide, in an average 12000 per year since 2013 (ToI, 2017). The cases are mostly from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh. Again, the statistics on farmer suicide are not free from misreporting and conspiracy theories.[9]

Table 1: All India total Farmers Suicides in 1995-2010

Year	Total	Year	Total
1995	10.720	2003	17,164
1996	13,729	2004	18,241
1997	13,622	2005	17,131
1998	16.015	2006	17,060
1999	16,082	2007	16,632
2000	16,603	2008	16,196
2001	16,415	2009	17,368
2002	17,971	2010	15,964
Total - 2,56,913			

**National Crime Records Bureau, Government of India,2010*

The Odisha State Crime Record Bureau and NCRB estimated 3509 suicide cases in last 11 years; highest number of 378 in 2004 followed by 365 in 2003 and 345 in 2002. The average suicides among the farming community here have been around 320. During the years 2004 and 2008, the number

[9]Farmers without clear land title, for instance, may not be recognized as farmers, artificially lowering their number. The negative media reporting may also be an incentive against the police reporting a farm suicide as one. Further, the definition of a farmer has not changed, though NCRB splits farmers into 'cultivators' and 'agricultural labourers'.

of farmer suicides got increased and again in 2009, it got decreased.[10] Most of the suicides have been reported either from industrially heightened districts (Keonjhar, Sambalpur and Sundergarh) or poor southern and western Odisha.[11]

Results

1. The historicity of Agriculture, Social Norms and Development of "Sense of Defeat" in Western Odisha

Agriculture depends upon a lot of peculiar features; climate/weather, relative scattering of production over a large territory, remoteness from marketing outlets, storage, processing and others. In this process, the small and marginal producers are mostly victims of these peculiarities and make them dependent on the capitalist operating in the buying up, processing, transportation and storage of farm produce. Since western Odisha as a whole was thought to be prosperous land with abundant natural resources and self-sufficient economy, the recent incidents of farmers' suicide can be rooted in the agricultural history and changing socio-cultural norms of this region. Further, this part has witnessed large scale depletion of natural resources, forest, grazing land and critical changes of time in agricultural activities, false sense of modernization and conspicuous consumption. Significant changes are in a mutual exchange of land, labour and livestock due to an increase in mechanization in agricultural activities among the rural agrarian population.

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[10]This drop in the farmer suicides rate clearly shows that it was triggered by agri-distresses only, which the government has been denying consistently. In 2008, in the context of centre's mega loan waiver scheme, the aggregate suicides dipped to around 260, and in 2009, the rate eased drastically when the state government along with some input subsidies increased the interest subvention on the credit lent by the co-operative banks, largest lender to farming community here- made the agri-finance cheap and accessible. (Farmers' Suicides decline by 40 PC in 2009. 3rd January 2010, The New Indian Express, Bhubaneswar Edition).

[11]It is reported that more than 60 farmers in western Odisha have committed suicide only in 2009. It is also reported that forty-three farmers killed themselves towards the end of 2009 (http/www.ndtv.com/news/india/farmer-suicide-on-the-rise-in-Odisha.17766.php.). In Balangir alone, 5 farmers have committed suicide in a single month i.e. October 2009.

Western Odisha comprises of 10-12 districts- Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundergarh, Boudh, Phulbani, Balangir, Sonepur, Kalahandi and Nuapada. The agricultural practice of this region was almost homogeneous till the establishment of Hirakud dam in the district of Sambalpur. Now, it can be categorised into three distinct types of agriculture and economy; (1) the northern part of Jharsuguda and Sundergarh with a mix up of cultivation in un-irrigated land and industries, (2) Parts of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir and Sonepur with Hirakud dam Irrigated lands and un-irrigated cultivable lands and (3) purely non-irrigated cultivable land and agriculture in the above districts. Till recently, these parts were untouched with modernization and conspicuous consumption. The un-irrigated rain-fed areas and Hirakud dam irrigated areas is having different sort of social and economic lifestyle.

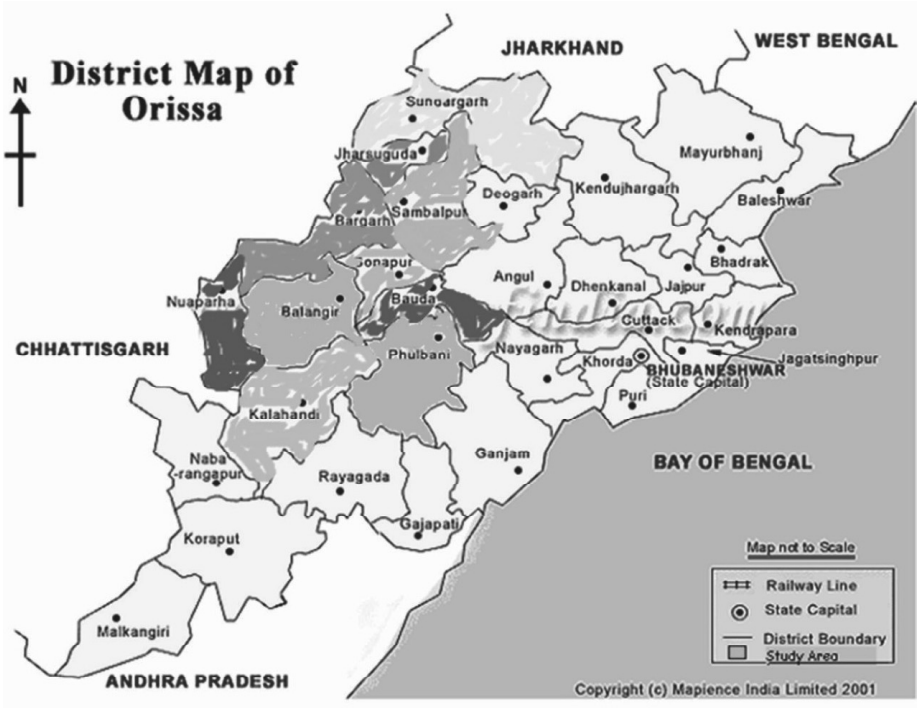

Fig. 1: Map of Western Odisha

During first few decades after the construction of Hirakud dam, it performed extremely well in terms of three purposes: irrigation and electricity supply in western Odisha and flood control in coastal Odisha. Around 5,40,000

acres of land in 611 villages of undivided Sambalpur and Balangir districts got irrigated through its canal system. Presently, it is not fulfilling the peoples' aspirations due to reduction in the storage capacity and increased mono-cropping (Sovani et al. 1960; Baboo, 2009).It is significant to note that almost all the farmers' suicide cases have been reported from the rain-fed Hirakud dam area as against the un-irrigated areas of Kalahandi and Balangir which have a different story of poverty, child selling and chronic problems.

The social backgrounds of the farmers who have committed suicide (case studies) show that all are either small or marginal farmers, married with 2-3 children in an average and particularly from one caste, i.e. Kulta belonging to Hindu religion. The common features for all the farmers is that they have been unable to make to the present-day lifestyle, unable to take care of children and just defeated from the supermarket of life. They have nothing to do with the state but to their family members. The peasant communities of this region were self-sufficient, non-consumerist and believed on community life. The major changes for these people came through Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization during 1990s. In Odisha, the per capita land holding has declined drastically, from 0.39 hectares in 1950-51 to 0.13 hectares in 2007-08. Similarly, marginal and small holdings have increased up to 83.8 percent.

Table 2: Land Holding Scenario in Odisha

Category of Farmers	No. of Holdings(in lakhs)	Area(lakh ha.)	Percentageto Total
Marginal (< 1.0 ha.)	22.95	11.55	23
Small (1-2 ha.)	11.14	15.44	30
Semi-medium(2-4 ha)	5.00	13.44	27
Medium (4-10 ha.)	1.45	8.17	16
Large (>10 ha.)	0.13	2.21	4
Total	40.67	50.81	—

Source: www.agriorissa.org, Department of Agriculture, Government of Odisha 2013-14.

If the agrarian history of Western Odisha is taken seriously, the per capita decrease in agricultural land is both a policy issue and a social problem.[12] After the 1990s, globalization in agriculture brought two major changes; cash crops got importance and big farmers got entry to the tribal land and made the indigenous self-sufficient people work on their farms as cheap labour. The outcome was that in the undivided Kalahandi and Balangir districts, the number of landless labourers and marginal farmers (below one-acre land) increased in a very high rate. During 1971-91, the percentage of marginal farmers increased from 17 to 39 whereas the percentage of large farmers declined from 4.7 to 0.9 percent. Again, there was a decrease of middle peasants (4-10 acres of land) from 30.4 to 9.9 percent and non-increase in the number of small peasants (1-4 acres). It is important to note that the proportion of large and middle farmers declined significantly.

These figures have raised several assumptions; Prasad (2001) assumed that several medium farmers have been reduced to landless peasants or marginal farmers and Omvedt (1996) observed that in the western part of Odisha most Adivasis and dalits have been alienated from 'good and fertile' lands to become marginal farmers or landless labourers. Consequently, fertile low land with high productivity is in control of less than 10 percent of the people. Secondly, the land per capita is decreasing due to some social reasons. If one person has 10 acres of land and two sons, tomorrow the land would be divided among the children and each one would get 5 acres each and it continues vertically. This is a common phenomenon among the agricultural castes like Kuta, Agharia and Dumal, who are considered as the expert of cultivation in this region. They have a special attachment towards their agricultural land and even if their children are well educated, they encourage going for tilling the land. Equally in problem are the sharecroppers.

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[12]Structural change is a complex phenomenon that can affect several structural attributes at the same time. For instance, the evolution of farm size is directly related to the evolution of the number of farms and is strongly influenced by the substitution of capital for labour. Reducing the number of farms by maintaining fixed the amount of utilised land implies an increase of physical farm size.

The marginal farmers and sharecroppers face the ire of agricultural distress at three levels. Firstly, the sharecroppers cannot get institutional credits due to the non-availability of land tenurial security. They are forced to borrow money from the moneylenders in an exorbitant interest rate to carry on agricultural activities. The contemporary agricultural market shows that the input cut is going up and the market price is going down due to globalization. Consequently, the sharecroppers' households are unable to cope up in society. Secondly, the farmers are facing difficulty in selling grains due to low official remuneration prices and inefficiency of government systems. This is the reason that most of the small or marginal farmers and sharecroppers are forced to commit suicide.

2. Structural Violence and Social Aetiology

Anthropological theorizing on suicide begins with the idea that most suicides entail an element of accusation and communicative acts, which can be categorised as "social aetiology" (Malinowski, Raymond Firth and Anthony Giddes). Consequently, anthropological studies argued that these are explicitly political or protest suicides, which has a message that it is their strategic objective against the state or whoever is responsible for the [quote] "wrong of moral, political, or economic dimension, a wrong that affects the lives of many" (Andriolo, 2006 and Lee, 2003). Thus, the social organization and the associated aetiology of suicide- an element of accusation and communicative act in relation to the causal factors- distress sale of paddy, inability to pay back bank loans, crop failures, sudden inflation, expensive fertilizers and pesticides, money lending and others need to be examined.

Though agricultural drought has been a common phenomenon in the backward districts of Balangir and Kalahandi since the 1960s, it is yet to be declared as a disaster in Odisha. The agrarian unrest, child selling, and starvation deaths are the outcomes of drought. There are lot of weaknesses in the recently announced drought relief package by the government of Odisha. in 2010, there was severe drought in at least 16 districts of Odisha, out of which 8 districts were in Western region. The major packages for drought-affected farmers are (a) Rs. 4000/ per hectare and Rs. 2000/ per

hectare ex-gratia for affected irrigated cultivable land and non-irrigated cultivable land respectively, (b) fifty percent rebate for buying plastic pipes used for cultivation of land, (c) waive of 50 percent water tax and sesh and (d) preparation of a list of villages affected with drought (*Rajya sarakar ankamarudi package ghosita*. 1st October 2010, The Samaj). All the Governments have seen for temporary curative measures, whenever there is pressure from the media, intellectuals or opposition political parties. Had it been so, the KBK districts where drought is a perennial disaster could have been included in the current Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP) underway in 16 vulnerable districts in the state (Odisha yet to recognise drought as disaster. 12th October 2010, Indian Express, Bhubaneswar). Though the Kalahandi and Balangir region has been included in the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), inclusion in the DRMP would have served the purpose better. If drought is considered a disaster, it would see the activation of the Odisha Disaster Management Act in the said regions. It would also see the initiation of early warning drought surveillance and response system in drought-prone areas which would be used to mitigate the effects of drought-like suicides. The other side of the relief package is that of its timing. The drought signs were very much there since the onset of monsoon. But the relief package was announced at the end of September. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of drought management plan says that in such early distress cases the relief package including the supply of short duration seed varieties, necessary changes in farming practices should have been announced by July end. It would have given the farmers time to plan their crop management judiciously to get back some agricultural income. That would not have only built up their capacity but would have taken partial care of their debt needs. Therefore, the announcement after July has little significance for the farmers.

In Odisha, most of the irrigation projects are lying defunct. The government of Odisha had set a target of providing assured irrigation to 35 percent of agricultural land in all the blocks during the 11th plan period, provided additional funding under AIBP (Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme) by the central government. Two major reports stated that the said target

could not be achieved during the period. The CAG Report in 2009 found that only 9 out of 33 AIBP assistance projects were in the completion stage. Another report says that 'the poor state-of-the-affairs in the agriculture sector could be gauged from the fact that about 75 percent of lift irrigation projects were lying defunct' (10th August 2010, The Hindu). The state government could escape in managing the percentage from 35 to 30, maybe because of the reduction of cultivable land in the state.[13] It was reported that the volume of agricultural land had come down from 61.08 lakh hectare lands as per the understanding with industrial houses, the agriculture land would come down by 10 lakh hectare in another 10 years.[14]

In KBK region, around 68.8 percent population in living Below Poverty Line. The causes are related to environmental, socio-cultural and governance factors. This part is experiencing recurrent droughts, skewed land distribution, inadequate irrigation, stringent forest laws and rigged market having exploitative monopolies in grains (Inter-Press service, 1999; Asia Times, 1999). Besides, the planning commission of India observed that non-seriousness of governance to deal with poverty and starvation deaths has aggravated the problem (Utkal Sambad, 2004). Further, the official poverty line is unable to include the actual poor and hence they are deprived of the anti-poverty schemes of the government. It was also observed that poverty alleviation programmes are failed due to rampant corruption, manipulation in the identification of target groups and non-awareness of schemes among the community (Odisha-Net, 2004).

Another major issue for the farming communities of western Odisha is consistent crop failure and government insensitivity towards it.[15] The plight of the farmers gets worsened because of two unusual consequences; the

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[13]The CM has reduced his number from 35 percent to 30 percent, recently, may be due to the reduction of cultivated land in the state over a period of time (Satapathy, 2001).

[14]Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister, Odisha, revealed the data while addressed to the 49th National Development Council meeting (Naveen accused of leaving farmers in lurch. 10th August 2010, The Hindu, Visakhapattnam).

[15]Farmers committing suicide due to crop failure in western Odisha, Govt refuses, 13 Jan, 2010, NageshwarPatnaik, Bureau / ECONOMIC TIMES.

low-quality paddy can't be sold and the borrowed loan for cultivation cannot be paid back. The farmers feel let down by the state government. They fail to understand the logic behind assessing crop loss only during the harvest season while it can be done earlier (The New Indian Express, 30th November 2010).[16] It is argued that Instead of providing any relief from the available sources, the state and the centre involve in politicizing the issue, hence increases frustration among the farmers. It is also argued that the state is having a British era famine code, which takes a loss of over 50 percent crop loss for eligibility to get government compensation (The Samaj, 23 January 2011).[17]

Distress sale of paddy has been a part of farmers' economic life, either the state-run '*Mandis*' or market yards are run by corrupt officials or the lack of procurement policies. Though the Minimum Support Price for paddy has been fixed at Rs.1,030, the farmers get as less as 600-700 rupees/ quintal as the officials declare it as of low quality. At the same time the mill owners in the weekly *mandis* cut 10 kg. per quintal before buying it. They also grade the paddy as low grade (Rs.900 in place of Rs.1000 per Kg.) or A-grade (Rs.930 in place of Rs.1030). even if the paddy is of good quality, the *mandis'* pay the farmers at the rate of low quality. This has been possible because there is the honeymoon between the department of supplies, Govt. of Odisha and the mill owners and '*mandis'*(The Samaj, 8th January 2011).[18] Also, the role of middleman to buy paddy cannot be denied.

Politics over water-industrialization-poverty has been a serious consequence of globalization in Odisha. One study says "dozens of farmers have committed suicide in Odisha in the past one year as the Hirakud dam is no longer serving its purpose, the dam built across the Mahanadi River, about 350 km from Bhubaneswar"(Hindustan Times, 16th Dec. 2010).

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[16]Drought turns *ryots* into farm hands. 30th November 2010. The New Indian Express, Sambalpur.

[17]State, Centre indifferent to Farmers' Plight. 23 January 2011, The Samaj, Oriya Daily.

[18]*Mandire dhanakati Rakhuthibaru krushaka asantusta*. 08th January 2011, The Samaj, local daily.

Hirakud Damwas constructed for three major purposes; to decrease the damage by flood in Coastal Odisha, to generate electricity and to facilitate irrigation in this region. But presently it has brought into debate three dichotomies; 1. Displacement of self-sufficient farming families' vs irrigation facilities for cultivable lands, 2. Flood control in the past vs present scenario and 3. Water supply to industries vs supply for farming in the present context. It displaced large scale self-sufficient farming families (Meher (2009)[19] found that at the initial phase around 50,000 hectares fertile land submerged, against which a record of 1.57,790 hectares during kharif season and 97,000 hectares during rabi season got irrigated in 300 villages. But the present situation shows that the irrigation potential for second crop in the Hirakud command area has reduced to one-third of the original area under cultivation. Now the available area for cultivation is hardly 60-70 thousand hectares, which is at the cost of 50 thousand hectares of submerged agricultural land and displacement of around 40 thousand families. Industrial activities and siltation at the upper end of Hirakud dam can be cited for the cause of lowering of water storage capacity of the dam and shortage of water at the tail end of the command area.

Further, the water storage capacity of the Hirakud dam reservoir shall reduce in the future because of a couple of factors. Firstly, the area surrounding the reservoir is now witnessing fast industrial growth and industries need huge water. One study has found that every year around 3,191,200 gallons water from the dam was allocated to the industries before 1997, which has increased to twenty-seven times in the past ten years (1997-2007). Giving water to these polluting industries has two-way impacts, impact upon quality of agricultural product and irrigation at the tail end. Hence, the dam has lost its principal objectives of irrigation and agricultural development in this region.[20]

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[19]www.merinews.com/article/hirakud-dam-displaced- families-seek -rehabilitation / 136009

[20]www.hindustantimes.com /rssfeed/bhubaneswar/ hirakud-dam-failing-famers-killing-themselves/ article-512674.aspx

Another major cause of farmers suicide is widespread cultivation Genetically Modified (GM) and High Yielding Varieties (HYV) crops for "more production". These have a serious impact upon the environmental, social and cultural life of the farming communities in western Odisha like other parts of the country.

In an ethnographic study in cotton-growing areas of Warangal district of Antdhra Pradesh, Stones (2007) found the links between modified strain due to farmers' experimentation/management skill and suicidal environment.[21] The theoretical departure for these events could be seen in the social structure itself. Earlier, the documented pattern of fads was a mix up of social and environmental learnings of the farming communities. But, the present day the process of "environmental learning" has broken down and the farmers left to rely only on 'social learning'. For instance, earlier days lurch for seed to seed of the villages has lost its identity. Stone (2007) argued that the ways local cultures perceive and deal with introduction of new energy paradigms, markets and products implies that we are willing to question our own ideas of modernization, technological progress and development. He further argues that institutions like government, corporations, agencies, NGOs etc; which are involved in 'development' still rely on a 'top-down' and ethnocentric perspective when they evaluate the effects of the projects which they are planning to implement. Despite their attempt to include as many 'stakeholders' into their sustainability analyses, such assessments seldom reflect the deeper social and cultural realities of the people in question.

The metamorphosis of capitalism has increased food prices, speculation in commodities and shrinking base like land for agriculture. Simultaneously, bank finance which had laid major thrust to agricultural credit and rural development till 1980s has gone into a systematic denial mode in the post-

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[21]Glenn Davis Stone, professor of Anthropology and Environment at Washington University worked on agricultural deskilling due to BT cotton among the farmers of Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh and observed that the seed fads had virtually no environmental basis and farmers generally lacked recognition of what was actually being planted.

[21]Prabhat Patnaik, Expand PDS to Insulate the Poor. 23 January 2011, Indian Express.

liberalization period. Land that had to be provided for agriculture to boost food productivity and availability is being given away to corporates, industries and real estates (Indian Express, 23rd January 2011).[22] Consumerism has killed the idea of equality, collectively, co-existence and co-operation among the farming communities. The informal economy based on the concept of resources, family as the unit of production-consumption and pattern of labour, absence of profit and capitalism in economic dealings and interdependence is almost over.

Conclusion

The jurisprudence of the Indian state dealing with agricultural policies, distress among the farming communities and farmers suicide is heavily dependent upon the statistical data provided by Economics and Public Health, the fields which may not be able to define the 'farmer' as a socio-cultural being, his identity, inter-community relationship, the distinction of traditional social norms, which were having sustainability and the state-imposed norms of privatization of resources and commons. The present-day social organization of the farming communities have alienated the 'self' and 'we' are feeling of the farmers and developed a sense of defeat among them. In addition to sociological theories, the economic analysis of the social norms and the norms created by the agricultural policies of the state provides a different picture for farmer suicides. The anthropological case studies have found that the traditional life of the farming communities had an obligation to each other including obligation about using land. The idea of private property, different agricultural policies and social plans imposed by the state has forced the farmer to commit suicide. The interpretation of farmer suicide cases through the theories of agricultural anthropology, customary law and the social norms would be able to bring out the truths of specific circumstances in which a farmer commits suicide, and will add few perspectives to think over 'farmers suicide' beyond the idea of 'altruism' propounded by Durkheim.

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[22]Prabhat Patnaik, Expand PDS to Insulate the Poor. 23 January 2011, Indian Express.

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Times of India (2001) 'In Odisha, funds for the poor are siphoned by babus'.

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CHAPTER 6

Farmers Movement in India

Madhukar Sharma

Abstract

[1]Framers constitute largest occupational group in India, their representation in democracy is decreasing, leadership is in crisis, their demand are very versatile, misery are high, and sufferings are constantly rising. Number can be treated as a dividend for the political gain, but Indian Farmers agitated so many times in independent India. Farmers movements in India has long journey but it never treated as political pressure group or important concern for political processes. Although defining farmers itself very crucial, scholars have differences toward the identity of the farmer, instead of it kisan is appropriate term to overcome from this dilemma. Farmers movement which happen in last decade have very different nature and political aspirations. To recollect the political leverages of the farmers there is a need to review the farmer's movements in India.

Introduction

Agriculture in India have multi-folded issues, people those are connect to the occupations related to it also have various issues and challenges. Farmers played a very important role in the formation of the nation, they were indulged to making of the nation, for their demand they were fought so many political battles in many ways. Mahinder Singh Tikait, Sharad Joshi, ChoudharyCharan Singh, SharadPawar and Kishan Patnaik there

are so many names attend to the farmer's politics in India. Farmers had a lot movement in India for the various demand and the political aspirations, farmer's movement have a contour of political mobilization. Movement which were happen under the gamut of farmer movement have a bigger issue of the definition of the farmer. Farmers participated in various political and social movement; they had contributed for the democratization of the demands of the rural India. Framers movement has a biggest quest for their classification and recognition. Scholarly debate leads in a unique horizon for the farmer's movement, they tend to categorise on the basis of the classical classification.

Defining the Farmers Movements

Farmers have widely been described as culturally unsystematic, unsophisticated and uneducated group. The term 'peasant' includes tenant, sharecropper, small farmer not regularly employed, hired labour, and landless labourers. Politically they have been at an underdog position and are subject to domination by outsiders. In economic terms, they are identified to be the small producers for their own consumption, subsistence cultivators who produce predominantly for the need of the family rather than to make a profit. Peasants play a major role in our lives directly by producing food and cultivating crops which are raw material for all the other industries. Peasants are the most oppressed groups. They are also most favourite target for the politicians. Indian society was predominantly an agricultural society dependent on peasants. The national culture of India was mainly the peasant culture.

Farmers movement classified in four major categories as Pre-British, British, Colonial and Post-Colonial movements, post-colonial farmers movement are divided in to pre-Naxal and post-Naxal movements, it can be divided into pre-green revolution and post-green revolution movements.[2] Some scholars divided it into pre-emergency and post-

[2]A. R. Desai (1986), *Agrarian Struggles in India After Independence*, Oxford University Press.

[3]K.Balgopal, (1988) *Probing in the Political Economy of Agrarian Classes and Conflicts*, Perspective Publisher.

emergency farmers movements.[3] There are certain movements which have continuity despite the change in political power and betterment of the conditions of the farmers in changing contours. Furthermore, post-independence farmers' movements were divided into two categories on the basis of economic class of the farmers which is classified as rich and prosper farmers and landless and marginalized peasants.

Renowned Farmer leader Kishan Pattnaik again rise the issue of the denomination of the farmer in India among landlords and landless peasants.[4] Peasant Movement refers to all the tactics used by the peasants in order to get their demands fulfilled. The tactics used by them maybe violent or non-violent. India is an agricultural economy; peasants are considered a crucial part of the society since they contribute in the most basic and important element of production; upon which all the other industrial activities are dependant. Peasant Movement have become a common phenomenon recently.

Usually those are depending on the agriculture, involved in cultivation, owner of land, supervisory work, tenants, absentee landlords, sharecroppers and landless labour etc. all are treated as *'kisan'* although there is no homogeneity in it but it includes all those are depend on agricultural activities. Over the half of the country`s manpower involved in agriculture. there are more than 200 farmers organisation divided across crop and regional lines yet, [f]armers across the country successfully put two of their core demands to policy makers at the centre and state: demand a waiver of loan and better prices for their harvest.[5]

Marxist scholars classified on the basis of economics classes but sociologist cum anthropologist Andre Beteille rise the issue of arbitrariness to categories the farmers movement in India on the basis of the class struggle.[6]Rudolph classified composition of Indian rural population in four categories on the basis of the their role and status in the society as 1) agricultural labour,

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[4]KishenPattnaik (2000) *Vikalpahinnahinhaiduniya*, Raj Kamal Prakashan, New Delhi.

[5]https://www.livemint.com/Politics/wFpY2DiRbwj86VliG6348J/Are-farmer-movements-in-India-changing-course.html (Accessed on January 10, 2020).

[6]Andre Beteille (1969*) Caste, Class and Power*, University of California Press.

[7]Rudolph andRudolph (1984) The Modernity of Tradition Political Development in India, Univrsity of Chigo Press.

2)small landlords, 3) bullock capitalist and 4) landlords.[7] Most of the classification of the farmers in India were made on the their economic and social conditions, still in India definition of farmer is need a lot of research. Diversity and complexity in social organisation lead towards the confusion and misunderstanding.[8] Moore described Indian Farmers movements under two major characteristics of 'passive' and 'docile' nature.[9]

Farmers movement is very often in India and its obvious because of the largest occupational segment of the population as well as marginalized and biggest sufferer. Farmers movement can be identified form the early history to modern age, they involved in independence and social reforms of the country. In modern age farmer's movement are also had changed its classical approaches and leadership. Farmers movement in modern India can be classified as New Social Movements. New Social Movement have transformation in values, symbol, leadership, agitation, presentation and demands. It also provides the alternatives for the lifestyle.[10]

Farmers Movement in Morden India

Peasant's resentment has increased over the time due to government's inability to implement the policies they made for the peasants. It is seen that the government in order to get the vote bank in their favour make fancy promises, the implementation of which remains a far-cry for the five years of their rule. As a result of such indifferent attitude of government towards the farmers, the resentment among them grows and takes the form of revolts and protests. In recent years there have been a number of *dharnas* by farmers in order to get their demand fulfilled. According to National Crimes Record Bureau, the farmers' suicide in 2016 was 12,602 which were 9.4%of the total suicides. The revolt these days is not based on the traditional problems like caste-based discrimination by landlords, exploitation by zamindars etc., the revolt these days is more related to the modern capitalist farmers, revolving around the questions of income, prices

[8]Ghanshyam Shah (2004), Social Movements in India: A Literature Review, Sage.
[9]Barrington Moor (2015), Social Origins of Dictatorship and democracy, Beacon Press.
[10]Veena Arora, Politics of Classness in the Farmers Movement in India: Vailidity of New Social Movement Paradigm, Sociological Bulletin, 50(1) March 2001.

and inputs. There came a need of protest when the rural farmer population upon which 61% of our population depends realised that there has been a shift of government attention from this rural population towards the urban countryside. Various protests done by farmers in the recent years and government approached differently to tackle peasant movements.

Below are discussed some famous farmers' movement of recent times, the resentment among the farmers has been increased and it has taken the form of protest. The protests were the result of various unmet promises of the government, unfriendly weather, low output, and the most important issue can be said to be huge pressure of unpaid loans on the farmers which the government promised to waive.

1. Farmers Movement in Mumbai

Mumbai March, In March 2018, over 50,000 farmers from 23 districts across Maharashtra started a 180 km long march Nashik to Mumbai. The kishan long march was organised by the CPI(M) sister origination All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS). The farmers covered a distance of 180 km to gherao the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha. The march was against Devendra Fadnavis government. The farmers alleged that the government has not fulfilled the promises of loan waiver schemes made in the last kisan long march. Another reason for protest was large scale damage of crops due to unpredictable weather. The association made a number of demands which included waiver of loan as well as electricity bills. Farmer demands implementation of the policy which was designed by the M S Swaminathan. They demanded enactment of the Swaminathan Commission recommendation with the 1.5 times increase in MSP (Minimum Support Price).A stop on the forceful acquisition of farming land and pension scheme for farmers.

They also demanded fair Implementation of the Forest Rights Act of 2006 that could confer upon the Adivasi farmers proper title deeds to lands that their families had been cultivating for centuries. Compensation for damages to cotton crops resulting from bollworm infestation and the unseasonal rains and hailstorms.

Farmers observed sensitivity while agitating for their rights. They took care of not causing any inconvenience to the commuters and scheduled

their march after the rush hours. The peasants also took care of the Board exams of the students on the day of march. The government in reaction of this, constituted a 6-member cabinet committee to discuss their demands. The government approved a substantial increase in the Maximum Selling Price of most Kharif crops.

All India Kisan Sabha called off the protest upon their demands being accepted by the Maharashtra government. On implementing the Forest Rights Act, Devendra Fadnavis said that all the pending claims would be cleared in six months. About the loan waiver scheme, the government claimed that it had distributed funds to banks for 46.52 lakh farmers and 35.51 lakh farmers had been disbursed their loan waiver amounts. The government also said that it will pursue the M.S. Swaminathan Commission report with the central government. It said that the farmers who were not entitled to the loan waiver scheme of 2008 shall be brought under the ambit of the current Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Shektari Sanman Yojna and the farmers from 2001 onwards would now get the benefits. The movement was very peaceful as well as Mumbaikar helped a lot to the agitators for drinking water, medical support and catering.

Swaminathan committee report- The government had constituted the National Commission on Farmers in 2004 under the leadership of Professor M. S. Swaminathan. The commission's recommendations for farmer welfare included land reforms, irrigation reforms, productivity growth, and access to basic services. It recommended setting a minimum support price, introducing safeguards for small and marginal farmers, and addressing the issue of risk overtaking the agricultural profession through better credit facilities and technological empowerment.

Farmers Movement in Madhya Pradesh, In June 2017, farmers took to streets, shutting down wholesale markets. They have dumped their produce and milk on streets and blocked highways while preventing delivery trucks from reaching city markets. Six farmers were killed during the protest which led the farmers to resort to violent means during the protest. Despite a substantial increase in production of *tur,* which saw the highest growth among all pulses, an influx of import of pulses from Myanmar, Tanzania,

Mozambique and Malawi caused the price of turn to fall from Rs 11,000 per quintal (from December 2015) to Rs 3,800 to Rs 4,000 per quintal since December 2016. The agricultural policies have encouraged higher production of crops previously in short supply but offered scant protection on prices. This was presented as a major step to promote higher production of pulses.

The farmers obliged, cultivation and production of pulses went up, but the government failed to keep its part of the promise. State agencies failed to procure much of the production at the assured price. Instead of getting Rs 5,000 a quintal, the farmers were forced to sell tur at Rs 3,000. Similar tragedy has befallen the soyabean farmers of Madhya Pradesh and chilli farmers in Telangana. Many farm commodities were traded support prices set by the government. That is because the government only committed serious sums to buying wheat and rice, but not other crops. This further exacerbated the problem.

Two developments seemed to have triggered the current protest. On the one hand, bumper crops have led to crashing down of crop prices for the farmer. On the other hand, the crop loan waiver announced by the newly elected BJP government in UP has reminded the famers of their long unfulfilled demand. Crash in prices is most evident in the case of pulses.

The demonetisation of old notes announced by the Modi government in November last 2017 did not help most farmers. Tomato farmers in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and onion farmers in Maharashtra and Gujarat were the worst hit, as their prices fell by 60 to 85 percent. Not a lot has improved six months after demonetisation and the move has worsened the circumstances which led to the farmers' agitations in the country today.

The farmers demanded farm loan waivers and higher prices for produce, such as cereals, oilseeds and milk. The farmers also asked for guaranteed minimum income of farmers. Their main problem was increase in cost of production and their sale being below the guaranteed price.

2. Farmers Movement in Delhi

Farmer movement in Delhi 2018, Farmers from different parts of the country

are knocking at the doors of Parliament in Delhi. Led by opposition leaders and activists, nearly one lakh farmers reached Delhi on Thursday for a march to Parliament today. All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, an alliance of various farmer bodies, has organised the protest called Kisan Mukti March. Almost all the opposition parties including the Congress are supporting the march. The march has disrupted traffic in Delhi on several stretches.

Farmers demand remunerative prices for their produce and freedom from debt. A pamphlet distributed by the activists details their grievances. It says farmers get only Rs 5 per kilo for tomato while consumers pay Rs 30, Similarly, the pamphlet shows such difference in rates of moong dal, apples and milk. Their list of demands includes unconditional loan waiver for farmers, clearing of dues by sugar mills, higher prices for crops, free electricity for farms and a cut in diesel prices. Protesting farmers demand a special session of Parliament on agrarian crisis to pass two Bills: one pertaining to one-time full loan waiver, the other for a long-term institutional measure to ensure farmers are not pushed into debt again. They also demand implementation of Swaminathan Commission recommendations that say the minimum support price should be fixed at 50% above the comprehensive cost of production.

In July, the Union Cabinet approved a steep rise in the minimum support price (MSP) of crops, giving farmers the promised 50% return on input costs, aiming at easing farm distress and boosting rural demand. The biggest increase in MSP, about 40-50%, is for coarse grains that are planted by the poorest farmers, mostly in unirrigated areas. The government said the "historic" Rs 15,000 crore move fulfilled the promise made in this year's budget that MSPs would be determined on the principle that the harvest should get the farmers 150% of the cost of planting and tending to the crop.

3. Farmers Movement in Tamil Nadu

Farmers Movement in Tamil Nadu 2016, Tamil Nadu recorded the worst spell of northeast monsoon in 140 years, and the AIADMK government officially declared a drought in the state in January this year. Owing to the

bad monsoon and drought conditions, several farmers allegedly committed suicide in the state. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) sought a detailed report from Tamil Nadu on farmer suicides based on media reports that estimated 106 farmer deaths within a month in Tamil Nadu. In February, Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami sanctioned Rs 2,247 crore as drought relief to more than 32 lakh farmers in Tamil Nadu. In Delhi, farmers from Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli districts in Tamil Nadu have been protesting at Jantar Mantar. In the skull protest, the skull symbolises the fate these farmers will meet if authorities do not help them out. Some farmers claimed the skulls are of their fellow farmers who committed suicide in the wake of drought.

The farmers want the Centre to announce a drought relief package of Rs 40,000 crore and a better support price for their produce. State and centre both governments did not help to the farmers of the Tamil Nadu, in this protest Ayyajannu lead the movement which reached to the Jantar-Mantar New Delhi. Protester adopted some innovative and crucial methods of the agitation as half shaving beard and hair, eating rats, eating snake and consuming urine. On 22nd day of the protest Tamil Nadu High Court ordered for the loan waiver to the cooperative banks.

Changing Contour Framers Movements

The protests are somewhere a result of government's fancy demands. The governments in order to get the vote bank in their favour make such promises to the farmers which they have no intention to fulfil. For example-loan waiver scheme, it is a pure example of impractical promises of government. On the basis of this scheme the farmers take huge amount as loans depending on the promises and policy of government. But when the time of repaying the loan comes and the banks pressurises the farmers and the government seems to have forgotten its promises then the farmers commit suicide. These impractical promises of government affect both the sides. On one side it makes the farmers dependant and creates a burden on the government treasury on the other hand it affects the farmers' whole life on non-implementation of the promises.

Avik Saha, convener of the Jai Kisan Andolan said there is this new class

of young farmers who can no longer be hoodwinked, They are not your dhoti-clad, topi-wearing, hookah-smoking farmers; they have aspirations, they are educated and tech-savvy, they want a better quality of life while living in their villages.[11]Rao Birendra Singh, the former agriculture minister at the time of Indira Gandhi found the demands of farmers to agitate in violent manner, disrupting traffic, blocking roads, refusing to supply produce to factories as unreasonable. He pointed out that the protests are not always related to unremunerated price policies, but they are relating to unwillingness of farmers to pay electricity bills, and their wish to get their loans written off. Such demands are unreasonable and too big for any government to meet.

Conclusion

Government has a vision to doubling the income of India farmers by 2022, central government lunched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KisanYojana), it's a scheme through which, all small and marginal farmers will get up to Rs 6,000 per year as minimum income support instead of the subsidy on various agricultural needs. It's a 75,000-crore scheme aims to cover 125 million farmers, irrespective of the size of their landholding in India, it's an effort to provide direct cash to farmers in their bank accounts. But the scheme has its loopholes now it depends on the availability of the funds and proper banking system to get the government aid. Indian agriculture has multi-fold issues hence farmers of India have an infinite battel to win. Although farmer's movements in India are not very unite and effective, there are certain causes for that as K.K. Sarkar said there is a lack of unity not only pan India level as well as regional level just because of caste dominance and other social determinants. In Western Utter Pradesh most of time farmers movements led by the dominant agricultural caste 'Jat', leadership also belong to particular caste.[12] Ghanysham Shaha defined the failure of the farmers movement just because of weak political consciousness and lake of the mobilizing zeal among the

[11]https://www.livemint.com/Politics/wFpY2DiRbwj86VliG6348J/Are-farmer-movements-in-India-changing-course.html (Accessed on January 10, 2020).

[12]Barrington Moor (2015), Social Origins of Dictatorship and democracy, Beacon Press.

leaders although it was just because of lake of the resources and connectivity.[13] The biggest group in the democracy (farmers) of India still losing its share in democratic practices hence farmers movement have huge history to be in the future.

[13]Ghanshyam Shah (2004), Social Movements in India: A Literature Review, Sage.

CHAPTER 7

Agrarian Crisis and the Plight of the Female Farmers in India

Barsa Priyadarsinee Sahoo

Introduction

The economic development and the standard of living of the Indian population largely depend on the productivity of the agricultural sector. However, in recent times unfavourable trends in the Indian agricultural sector with declining prices of crops, widening disparities between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors have contributed towards increasing agrarian crisis in the country. The most discussed result of the agrarian crisis is the increasing number of farmer suicides in many parts of the country. The latest data released by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) revealed that 10349 farmers had committed suicide in India in the year 2018 out of which 9528 are male, and 821 are female. Many scholars have questioned this data provided by NCRB on female farmers as in most of the cases women were never considered as farmers instead, they were considered as the widows of the male farmers or as the helping hand of the family. The government of India considers those as farmers who own land. Though a large number of women are engaged in farming but not categorised as farmers as ownership of the land usually held by men. The exclusive definition of 'farmer' provided by the government deprives the women farmers of enjoying the benefits of various policies which increases their plight after the death of their husbands. The struggle for survival by these women is filled with obstacles and uncertainties. Dependent on the hetero-patriarchal structural of the family, women are left fending

for themselves, their children, their elderly, along with the harassment of the bank and money lenders. Besides, they have to deal with the failure of crops, negative return from farming and managing daily expenses. Most research papers have studied and analysed the agrarian distress and the reasons for farmer suicide. However, very few have pondered upon the plight of the female farmers. In this context, the present chapter examines the status of the women farmers in India and analyses the problems they face because of the non-recognition of their work. Using secondary sources, the chapter found that as the second sex women farmers are used as Marx's reserve army, and this leads to the troubles they have to face as dependent farmers of the family or the widows of a deceased farmer.

The rest of the chapter is divided into four sections. Firstly, the chapter discusses the background of the agrarian crisis in general and farmer suicide in particular and discusses the trend of farmer suicide rate in the last decade. The second section discusses the plight of the female farmers in detail, the denial of their rights over the land, the non-recognition of their work and the sudden responsibilities they have to deal with after their deceased husbands. The third section discusses the plight of women farmers from the Marxian perspective, and the fifth section provides the concluding remarks of the author.

Agrarian crisis and Farmer Suicide in India

Over the last three decades, we were witnessing a large number of farmers committing suicide in the country. The situation of the farmers was not alike before as more than 60 per cent of India's population were dependent on agriculture. However, during the 1990s, farmers of India became the centre of considerable concern when noted journalist P. Sainath highlighted a large number of suicides among them. The rates of these suicides reached almost epidemic proportions in some of the states particularly in Punjab, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. This trend of suicide has accelerated with globalisation which has completely changed the discourse of Indian agriculture. Apart from that, several farmer's movements have expressed the crisis that Indian agriculture was going

through. These farmer's movement, along with the concern of the media and researchers had put the content of farmer suicide into perspective. Political economist, sociologist have conducted many studies, and other scholars to understand the crisis and farmer's suicide from different perspectives.

Various studies have indicated that the farmers who committed suicide across the country in the last three decades were due to a three-fold crisis caused by trade liberalisation and globalisation policies, deregulation of inputs, imports and prices and the inevitable consequence in deepening debt (2016, Dandekar). With the introduction of the neo-liberal economic policies in 1991, significant domestic regulations were removed in order to encourage free trade, technology imports and foreign direct investment. Though some academic studies and government policy document reveals that the economic reforms had brought an all-round development still the situation of the rural farmers presents a different picture. Dr Suneeth Kumar, president of Raitha Krishi-Karmikara Sanghatane (RKS) has blamed the introduction of LPG as a reason for the increasing number of farmer suicides. He mentioned that-

"India never witnessed farm suicides before the introduction of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation policies. With the implementation of these policies, the agrarian crisis began to deepen resulting in farmers' suicides" (2015, The Hindu).

Though the Government of India has taken many initiatives such as National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture(NMSA) for promoting sustainable agriculture through climate change adaption, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY)which provides an end-to-end solution in the irrigation supply chain, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)to provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crop as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases. However, the number of farmers committing suicide in India is increasing.

As per 2018 NCRB data, the overall suicide rate is increasing. However, the rate of farmer suicide is decreasing (figure 1). As we can see (Table-

1) in 2010, the rate of farmer suicide was at 6.6 per cent whereas, in 2018, the farmer suicide rate stands at 3.63 per cent which is 2.97 percent lower. The figure shows a steady decline in farmer suicide rate in India over the last decade. However, many have questioned the authenticity of the data provided by NCRB on farmer's suicide.

Table 1

Year	Overall suicide rate	Farmer suicide rate
2001	10.6	7.09
2002	10.5	7.60
2003	10.4	7.17
2004	10.5	7.50
2005	10.3	6.97
2006	10.5	8.23
2007	10.8	6.64
2008	10.9	6.40
2009	11.4	6.78
2010	11.2	6.16
2011	11	5.31
2012	10.6	5.80
2013	11	4.35
2014	10.6	4.54
2015	10.6	4.56
2016	10.3	4.09
2017	9.9	3.77
2018	10.2	3.63

Source:NCRB Report, 2018 (https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/ADSI-2018-FULL-

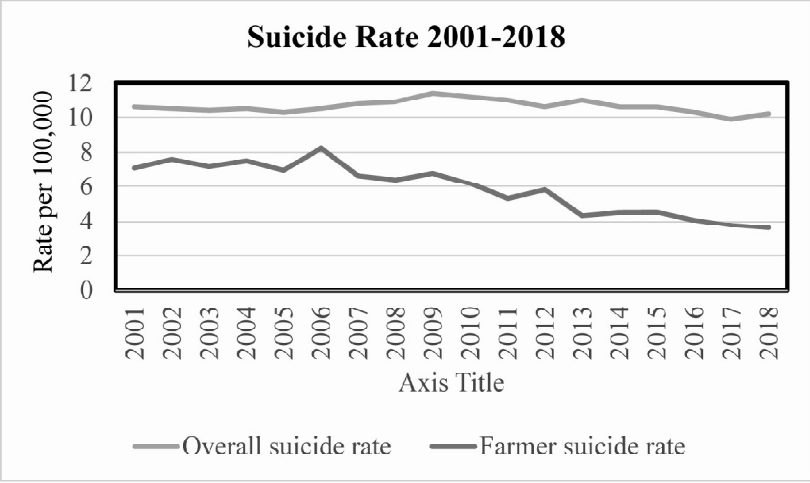
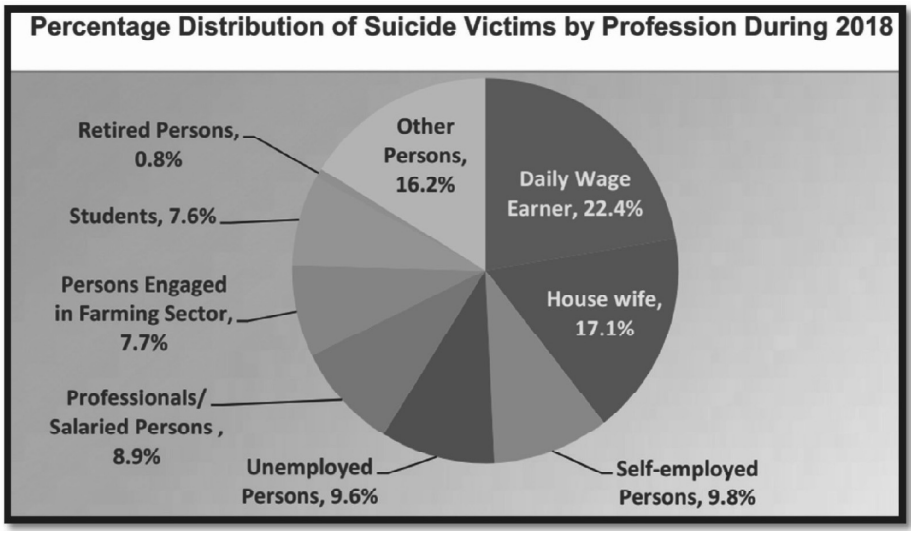


Fig. 1:

Source:NCRB (2018). *Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India*. New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, p.9.


Percentage Distribution of Suicide Victims by Profession During 2018
Retired Persons, 0.8%
Other Persons, 16.2%
Daily Wage Earner, 22.4%
Students, 7.6%
Persons Engaged in Farming Sector, 7.7%
House wife, 17.1%
Professionals/ Salaried Persons , 8.9%
Unemployed Persons, 9.6%
Self-employed Persons, 9.8%

Source: NCRB (2018). *Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India*. New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, p.9.

REPORT-2018.pdf Accessed on May 22, 2020)

If we look at the pie chart provided by NCRB on the division of suicide victims by profession during 2018, we can see that the percentage of suicide is higher among daily wage earners (22.4%) followed by housewives (17.1%).The suicide rate of persons engaged in the farming sector stands at 7.7 per cent. It is suspected that not all suicides appear in the NCRB counts because of the stigma and fear of prosecution associated with farmer suicide. Along with that, the occupational classifications used by NCRB are subject to error. This is a potential problem for the women whose farmland is in the name of their male relatives (husband/son) and hence, they might not be regarded as farmers. Therefore, most of the times, women farmers do not get counted as farmers. As they are considered as the widower or relative of a farmer, the suicide may be counted as housewives' suicide (17.1%) which is quite higher as per NCRB data. Hence the concept of 'farmer' plays an important role while discussing farmer suicide. The following section discusses the problems and prospects associated with the definition of the farmer and the denial of land rights to the women.

Female Farmers in India: The Unrecognised Sex

In rural India, the socio-economic and political status of a person is reflected

based on the amount of land a person holds. As far as women are concerned, access to and control over land has critical implications for the welfare and development of the woman. For promoting gender equality, women's right overland is necessary. The Planning Commission also recognised that land ownership is a key instrument for reducing socio-economic and gender inequities in the country. However, in India, gender-disaggregated data on ownership of assets is not available (Plewis, 2014). Many a time, women's right over land and resources are mediated by her relationship with the male members of the family. Only after the death of the husband, a married woman gets ownership over the marital land. This denial of the right over the land has made many scholars question the data that is available on farmer suicide.

There are two sources of data that is being used to calculate farmers in India. The first is the Census data, conducted every ten years. This asks questions for main and marginal workers. For women, even if they are working on the farm from morning to evening, they are categorised as housewives rather than farmers. Every year tens of thousands of women get excluded from the farmer suicide data in the country just because they are never considered as farmers. As a female farmer describes,

> "We work in the field from day to night, contribute from pre to post-production in agriculture, but we are invisible because we are not the landowners and we do not have land pattas in our name. Land is important for us to get our right as farmers"
>
> *Ms Sunita Devi, Bihar*[1]

Activists argue that the plight of the women farmers is unheard because of the non-recognition of their work. Women's engagement in unpaid work has made them internalise the fact that they do not engage in any kind of work. As per Oxfam's annual inequality report, across the world, women and girls every single day and every year produce 12.5 billion hours of unpaid work which is $10.8 trillion annually, and that is five times of India's GDP (PTI, 2020). Two major problems the female farmers face is the

[1]https://drive.google.com/file/d/10g3Hsge0Us40R8ihiW57apGh9bfzatxS/view (accessed on 19th May, 2020)

denial of land rights, and the other is the non-recognition of their work. This practice of not recognising the work of women has made them internalise that they are not part of the workforce even though they participate in the work. "In Tamil Nadu, you ask a woman who works 16 hours a day 'what do you do', and she says, 'I sit at home'"(PTI, 2020). This idea of unpaid work needs to be challenged, and the women's work, whether at home or at the farm should be given proper recognition.

Thirdly, the female farmers are deprived of various government scheme and benefits as they are not recognised as farmers. Only after the death of their husbands, they get recognised as the widow of the deceased farmer and the compensation they get. Patriarchal traditions and superstitions have discouraged women owning land in India. the women who take on the traditional work of men when their father, brother or husband commits suicide have been particularly affected. The pressure of the debt, harassment of the moneylenders, continue to bother the families of the deceased farmer. In some cases, the land has to be sold to repay the debt, and in that case, the major source of income is a loss for the woman. Apart from these immediate effects, they are further marginalised in the patriarchal society through systems like dowry. Hence, taking control of their own lives a far reach dream for these farmers. While a large number of literature have been produced to analyse the reasons for farmer suicide, it has overlooked its impact on female farmers(Janakiramanam, 2014).

When a farmer commits suicide, the worst affected is are the family that is left and the burden to manage the family now puts into the hands of the female. Figures quoted by the UNDP and the IPCC suggest that 80 per cent of people displaced by the climate crisis are women. They are all the more vulnerable due to non-climatic factors. The UNDP also said that 70 per cent of the people worst affected by the 2004 tsunami were women and children," Sainath said (PTI,2020).The women who otherwise engage in intense domestic labour throughout the day now has to take up work for managing the family finances as well. In rural India, generally, a women's (farmer's wives) day starts with taking care of the livestock and milking the cows and buffaloes. Cooking and serving others three times a day

takes up a good amount of their time. Cleaning the house and courtyard, making cow dung, taking care of the elderly is a regular scene in every house(Padhi, 2009). Despite being pushed into indebtedness and without being able to clear the money, they are in no position to think of wag work. The internalised taboo also do not let them change the lives of their daughters and reproduces another generation of women who mostly engage in household work. This internalisation leads to the reproduction of subordination in the next generation of women. Even if they aspire to go to school and study the phenomenon of mass suicide limits their dreams by putting them into difficult situations.

Female Farmers: Marx's Reserve Army

Marx saw reserve army labour as an inevitable outcome of the process of capital accumulation during industrialisation. When capital gets accumulated, certain people went out of employment to a reserve army. Conversely, in order to capital gets accumulated, reserve army was needed. Without such a reserve, capital accumulation would cause wages to rise, and the process of accumulation would itself be threatened as the surplus value was squeezed.

While Marx did note that certain workers (the pauperised lumpen proletariat) might bear the burden of unemployment, he was concerned to show how the expansion of capitalism inevitably drew more and more people into a labour reserve of potential, marginal and transitory employment, rather than to identify any group of workers as particularly vulnerable. Marx did not consider women as a group in his reserve army of labour model. Nevertheless, the extension of women's involvement in wage labour in all western economies clearly fits the picture of the continued expansion of the reserve army drawn by Marx(Bruegel, 1979).

Marx's reserve army concept argues that women generally are categorised as housewives though they have the potential to become a full-time wage earner by working on the farm. Even if the woman is working in one's own farm, still that labour is categorised as 'help' rather than labour. As Marx has argued, here women are considered as potential reserve labour, and in the time of need, the family exploits the labour of the female. Hence,

again the idea of 'unpaid labour' clearly degrades the identity and dignity of female farmers. In order to get recognition as farmers, they need to realise the fact that there is nothing called unpaid labour. Moreover, female farmers have to be vocal about their rights and identity.

Men overwhelmingly make up the farmer suicides, pushing women into the primary breadwinner role. Women then struggle to make a living in an occupation characterised by discrimination. While women manage various ancillary activities in agriculture, including winnowing, harvesting, and grazing, men usually select crops and manage income. Most women are beginning to know the fact that they are expected to take decisions. They were in a social situation, where women were always subjected to other people's decision. Hence after the death of a farmer, the prevalent scenario is both confusing and challenging for them.

Conclusion

When we say the word 'farmer', does the picture of a female working in the farm comes to our mind? When we discuss farmer suicide in our country, do we picturise female farmers committing suicide? Have we ever come across a piece of news reported a female farmer committing suicide due to debt or loss in the farmland? Have we come across any book on farmer suicide (otherwise not especially on women) which cover page has a picture of women working on the farm? If answers to all these questions or even some of these questions come no, then we know how much recognition the women farmers need. In the patriarchal society, they are being subordinated and being used only as "reserve army" rather than full-time main workers. Their rights on their lands need to be recognised, and the work they do on the farm also needs recognition. They need to be treated equally and should be given some decision-making capacity; otherwise, their plight will continue to grow day by day, even with the decreasing farmer suicide.

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CHAPTER 8

Agrarian Crisis and Farmers issues in India: From Indebtedness to Suicide

Sumant Kumar

Abstract

The growing pressure of indebtedness, rising cost of cultivation, declining returns from agriculture, adverse impact of economic liberalisation, etc, are commonly identified as the main causes of agrarian distress in India. Global Warning increased the tension among farmers as drought; flood is affected loss in agricultural sectors. Due to loss in agriculture, farmers are bound to take debt from bank and from other private sources. Continuity of loss in agriculture sector, and increasing debt interest every year disappointed farmers to raise their voice against government for subsidies or debt relief. Folded hands of government towards farmer's not only increased the movement against the government but also increased the suicide rate. Every farmer is having tension that lender or bank agent will not arrogate their land. There are several cases is noticed in which farmers were put behind the bar for not paying their debt or their land forcefully arrogated by recovery agents. Finally, no helping hand from anywhere or due to burden of heavy debts, they force themselves to take extreme step of self-killing. This paper has widely covered how the farmer's situation deteriorated from the 1990s to present time. This paper has mostly made to deal with both sociological and economical approach to know the reason for committing suicide.

Introduction

Since 2001, every half hour one farmer has committed suicide in India. Official data, on average, shows that nearly 16,000 farmers committed suicide every year in India since last decade or so. According to the latest census, which was taken in 2011, it reported that nationwide rate of farmers committed suicide was 16.3 per 100,000 farmers. This was slightly higher than the 15.7 per 100,000 farmers who had committed suicide per 100,000 in 2001. The Economic Survey 2017-18, which were released in Parliament on Monday ahead of the Union Budget, 2018 had key implications for agriculture sector which employs more than 50 per cent of the total workforce in India and contributes around 17-18 per cent to the country's GDP. However, this other fact is that farmer population falls by 9 million in 10 years. It has declined from nearly 50% in 1951 to 24% in 2011, which means the number of farmers has come down by half. Total cultivators in rural areas have declined from 40% in 2001 to 33% in 2011. Gender-wise, females have moved away more sharply than their male counterparts from being cultivators. Their percentage has fallen from 37% in 2001 to 29% in 2011.

Journalist P Sainath says there are 95.8 million cultivators for whom farming is their main occupation, which is less than 8% of the population. In another statement by Devendra Sharma, agricultural researcher and policy commentator stated that "unlike the US, in India when the family owns a piece of land everyone works on the farm. So if we make a rough calculation of say 90 million households engaged in agriculture and multiply it with 5 (the average Indian family size) the number you get pretty much is equivalent to 53%". If we add the number of cultivators and agricultural labourers, it would be around 263 million or 22% of the population (1.2 billion). Then where does the common perception of 53% of the population is involved in agriculture come from? It needs to be remembered that over 600 million Indians dependent on agriculture are not farmers. They are deployed in an array of related activities including fisheries. And this confusion is widespread and innocent.

Unfortunately, current situation and circumstances are such that they are being forced to commit suicide because, in the year 2017, there are some 216 districts in the country faced drought-like situation because of deficient rainfall. In and almost all the state conditions of farmers are deteriorating day by day the price of all the major agrarian commodities have collapsed. It is to be noticed that even in Punjab (agriculture rich farmer) reports of farmer suicide noticed where it is hardly expected. The *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna* has clearly failed and many others have clearly ended up just on paper. In such a situation the farmers have no option but to unite for the struggle.

However, the situation of farmer was quite good before liberalization policy implemented in India. To know the farmer situation in India, we have to trace back the farmer history since independence. During British India, most of the fertile land was occupied by the *zamindars*. Farmer has to pay tax for cultivation on *zamindars* land. Huge taxes made the worst condition of farmer and were not able to run their family due to this borrows money from *zamindar* as debt was common in India. Due to high rate of interest, they have to borrow another loan to pay their earlier debt which resulted bonded labour practice in India on agriculture land. British administration made series of changes in the commercialisation of agriculture to earn more profit which mostly for the privileged class to acquire more land and increase more taxes on their farmer. Privileged class were able to expand production because of having large share on landholding and their economic position but small landowner or poor farmers were unable to compete them because of having a very small land share and poor economic conditions which deteriorated the conditions of farmers in the Country.

After Indian Independence several initiated were taken to improve the agriculture production in which the green revolution began in the 1960s, to introduce high yielding variety (HYV) technology to increase production through use of water-seed-fertilise including land and crop based subsidy or credit. In the first phase of green revolution was limited to water-rich regions and given especially for wheat and rice etc. In the second phase

of green revolution, the 1980s included non-food crops including cash crop like cotton. HYV technology, production and distribution of seeds, fertilizer and other equipment were undertaken by the government with some supporting institutions. The initiation of programme like green revolution helped a lot for lower-caste farmer who worked under the upper caste landholder. The new provisions under green revolution fulfil their long-cherished desires as availability of land at low-cost credit, HYV seeds, etc that provided higher profit to them.

The agricultural revolution was introduced spelt prosperity for the farmers, and true, efforts were made to expand irrigation, but the programme only accepted a limited number of states, "the area under irrigation did not increase substantially and cultivation of high value crops like cotton was left to the vagaries of monsoon." And the other side the new HYV seeds require high doses of pesticides, fertilisers and other inputs, which resulted higher cost in cultivation. Most of the farmer was not updated with the information of credit policy on changing market situation or agriculture extension at the time of submission of their application. First-generation of farmer did not face any problem with their modern agriculture technique as they have some experience or policy were note hidden. However, in recent most of the credit scheme policies were framed for the farmer, they were not aware and even did not have a bit of knowledge about market situation. And even in most of the case interference of market agents, traders, input dealers and institutional finance including lack of crucial services information about insurance, warehousing, post-harvest processing, and export made more complicated to get all sort of benefits which were brought for the purpose.

Due to that risks and uncertainty increased with modern agriculture techniques after the liberalisation, privatisation and globalization policy were initiated in 1990s reform. In 1992 under the financial reforms recommendation of the Narasimha Committee "targeted priority lending" or "directed credit" implemented in agriculture sector because earlier farmers are required to depend on moneylenders/ private shopkeepers, who usually charge exorbitant rates of interest, for a timely agricultural

input requirement. However, public sector was unable to supply the varieties of HYV seeds as per the demand. Thus, the private sector gradually emerges as dominant supplier and in the 1980s in the seed market. Since 1991, 100 % foreign equity was allowed in the seed industry. Later in 2006 public sector share were reduces to 42 per cent and private sector increased to 58 per cent. This later impacted the prices of HYV seeds became high due to private monopoly and public sector interference were reduced. The share of private sector investment in agriculture, which was 54% in 1980-81, gradually increased to 80% in 2003-04. Even government declared minimum support prices were increased but it did not benefit the farmers as these prices are meant to compensate as the cost of production which became too high in the absence of public investments in HYV seeds.

Including seeds, price hike also noticed in power and other tariffs, as well as irrigation rate. Similarly, government withdrawal of fertiliser subsidy and the cost of overall cultivation hike many times. All these changes in the policy resulted the growth rates went down in yields. The overall share of agriculture in real gross domestic product (GDP) fell from average as it was 3.5% per year for 1981-82 and 1996-97, reduced to only 2% for 1997-98 and 2004-05.

The consequence of economic liberalisation not only lowered the prices of Indian agricultural products but also minimize the support price, lowered the subsidies, credit and other facilities were removed by the government which were earlier to facilitate the farmer and to help economically. Small landowner and poor Indian farmers were unable to compete for foreign agriculture product which imported to India that increased the Indian farmer dependency on subsidies. In some circumstance, if crop failed farmers totally dependent on the government to waive their loans. If government unable to waive the loans of farmers, they have to borrow loan from other sources in which many farmers borrow money from the private banks with a huge rate of interest. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) a total of 11,744 farmers ended their lives in India in 2013, down from 13,754 farmers in 2012 in which most farm suicides

have been linked to debt. It has been noticed that a sharp rise in input costs, water crises, price volatility and crop failure due to pest attacks and disease. A total of 296,438 farmers have killed themselves in India since 1995. As many as 1,82,936 farmers have killed themselves between 1997 and 2007 (Govt. of India, 2008).[1] With a total of 7,653 cases, five key states - Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka - still account for two-thirds of all farmer suicides in the country. In 2017 Centre tells Supreme Court that over 12,000 farmer suicides per year. There are several cases on farmer suicide has been noticed but the NCRB defines that a farmer/cultivator is one whose profession is farming and includes those who cultivate their own land/leased land/other's land with or without the assistance of agricultural labourers. If we trace the farming suicides cases of people who have land on their names are considered as farmers, according to several studies undertaken. There remains ambiguity in the definition and classification of farmers, which further affects recognition of the female face in agriculture.

Historical Background

While discussing historical background of agriculture situation Mohanty stated that under the British India, most of the fertile lands occupied by zamindars. Farmer have to pay huge tax on cultivating their (zamindars) land. Since the tax was quite high, so their economic condition was very bad to run their family and they were bound to borrow money from zamindar as debt. In most of the cases farmers were unable to pay the debt and became bonded labour. Later, British administration brought a series of changes in the commercialisation of agriculture land and expansion of the politico-legal system. The new land tenure provision enhanced the propensity to invest more in land. Resulted the privileged class acquired more land. The cultivation area was increased and more emphasis was made on to cultivate cash crops like cotton, sugar cane, jute, etc, to feed Britain's industrial demand. Cultivation of cash crops was largely profitable because of increasing demands in both domestic and international markets.

[1]Mohanakumar, S. (2010), Agrarian Crisis and National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector, Social Scientist, Vol. 38, No. 5/6 (May-June), pp. 62-75

The rich upper caste zamindars were largely benefited from this reform as they were able to expanded production because of having large share on landholding and their economic position. But the other side small landowner or poor farmers were unable to compete them because of have very small land share and poor economic conditions. Even in loss of these commercial of cash crops due to weather and did not affect large land holder as they most of the loss recovered from labourers to lowering the wages and increasing the price of their surplus food grain. British introduced agrarian changes did not hurt upper caste system as they were also worked under British a as intermediaries or engaged in money lending activities to control large land which were under the control of British administration. Situation of small-scale farmer was even more frightening. However, in the beginning of the 20th century some positive sign were noticed with "protest movements by peasantry and the members of lower castes against the exploitative land, labour and credit relations and rising economic inequality among the various castes (Mohanty2013)."

Post-independence, new government of India made special focus on agriculture and initiated several step to improve the economic condition of rural society including to achieve agricultural growth and distributive justice. "Keeping in view that large-scale unequal distribution of land, especially the landlessness of lower castes and tribes, land reform became a part of the planning for a package of measures like abolition of intermediaries, imposition of ceiling, distribution of ceiling surplus land, etc, which was introduced invariably in all states." Even after several programmes and policy, Indian government failed to achieve the desired goal and even was not able to remove inequalities between small landowner and large land owner. However, it makes some positive changes on groups of lower caste in few states such as West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

The Green Revolution

The Green Revolution was introduced in India when Indian farmer and agriculture were reduced the production compare to other countries after the Green Revolution period when Indian agriculture was converted into

an industrial system to adopt modern technique and technology such as the use of high yielding variety (HYV) seeds, tractors, irrigation facilities, pesticides, and fertilizers to increase agriculture productivity developing and under developed countries. The Green Revolution phase was introducing in India in the beginning of 1960s which led to an increase in agriculture production, especially in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. One of the major achievements in this undertaking were the development of high-yielding varieties of wheat, and rust resistant strains of wheat (online web: Indian Agricultural Research Institute) IACR.

This continued till the 1990s when the Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation was welcome in India. In the beginning it seen some achievement in this regard but within few year Indian farmers were affected by that.

Post-liberalisation period, farmer not only yield risk but also price risk. Mohanty aptly observed that.

> Indian agriculture has always lurched from crisis to crisis. If the monsoons are good then there are floods, if they are bad there are droughts, if the production of mangoes is excellent then there is a glut and prices fall, if the onion crops fail then that too brings tears. The artisanal nature of agriculture has always kept farmers on tenterhooks, not knowing quite how to manage their economy, except to play it by (y)ear.

He argues that in the present context, agriculture is an economic residue that accommodates non-achievers resigned to a life of sad satisfaction and the villager is bloodless as the rural economy is lifeless. It is hard to recognised, but the fact is that farmer suicide are results of economic liberalisation policies that were adopted by India in early 90s. Reporters' Guild observed that India never witnessed farmer suicides issues before liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. With the implementation of these LPG policies, the agriculture area affected and agrarian crisis began to deepen resulting in farmers' suicides," Similarly Mr. Kumar stated that "the prices of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, farm machineries and equipment's are on constant rise and the prices of

agriculture output are always fluctuating. As a result, the manufactures of agricultural inputs make more profits and farmers incur heavy losses,". (Mohanty 2013)

Politicians are busy in making money, we can notice that, nearly 90 per cent of the Rajya Sabha MPs are crorepatis while the average of total assets Upper House parliamentarians is Rs 55 crore. Bank money was taken by fugitive economic offenders and have made their safe havens in foreign countries these are as such Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi with Rs 11, 360 crore, Vijay Mallya Rs 9,000 crore, Jatin Mehta with 6,800 crore, including Lalit Modi and Vikram Kothari (Mohammad 2018). Government is unable to prevent money through these fugitive even not able to take them back or to recover money from them, but the other side government to compensate these money reduced the interest on bank deposit, put un-necessary charges on deposit and withdrawal, shows "reluctance" in farm loan waiver and removed subsidy on agriculture product. In few cases government insulted farmer to give them cheque of 1 paisa, 40 paisa, or less than one rupee as a relief (Mohammad 2017). A group Rayalaseema Saguneeti Sadhana Samiti (RSSS) that works for drought-hit farmers in Rayalaseema, sent over 400 cheques of 68 paisa each to the prime minister by Andhra Farmers to highlight their problems (Tiwari 2017). However, the other side politician response on the farmer suicided is quite negative as MLA from Kota, Hiralal said that farmers commit suicide because of the consideration, so they can get monitory benefit.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party MP from north Mumbai Gopal Shetty has attributed that farmers' suicides to a 'fashion'. He also stated that "Not all farmers' suicides happen due to unemployment and starvation a fashion is going on (The Times of India 2016). Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, BJP MP Sanjay Dhotre has kicked up a major controversy after he said that farmers should be "let to die" if they are incapable of or cannot afford farming (Rashid 2016). These types of controversial remarks against farmers were not only discouraging them to engage in farm activity but surround with depression. In another political leader Rameshwar Sharma on made a derogatory statement over farmers' suicide, saying that the one who commits suicide are not the real farmers.

Who is the real farmer even NCRB is confused, as in our country there is no uniform definition about farmer. If we can access the data we can see that since 1995 to 2014, across India farmer suicides cases has been reached 300,000. Recently in 2013 farmer suicide was about 11,772 and 13,754 in the year 2012. The NCRB in its latest Accidental Death and Suicide report for 2016 says that there were 948 farmer suicides every month or 31 suicides every day. In recent, state governments are hiding suicide rate at national level, NCRB has wangle suicides in several categories. RTI filed in 2018 revealed that total 15,356 farmer committed suicides in last six-year period. January to February 2019 itself reported 396 cases. Government has provided ex-gratia to 102 families out of 396 suicide cases in the state.[2]

Reason behind Farmer's Suicide

Rao expressed that more than 80% of Indian farmers are holdings less than two hectares of land for agriculture. Due to fragment on property dispute within family, it resulted small land ownership which makes high risk in agriculture outcome. The smallness of the holding land is not benefiting from government and then introduced mechanization, modern irrigation techniques, and other investment-based technological improvements, which resulted productivity is suboptimal. And the other side he also stated that the unpredictable, minimal rainfall all over India adversely affected farm output including climatic vagaries such as hailstorms, drought, flood. Government-administered minimum support price (MSP) is not even facilitating the cost of production and small and marginal farmer's dependency is increasing on expensive loans, primarily from private lenders, to fund their farming process; with interest rates 30% to 60%, in many instances. Repayment of debt was not easy to pay if crop failed which results Farmers caught in debt traps. They need another loan to repay their earlier loans and additions money to support their family and

[2]Business Today (2019), 11,379 farmers committed suicide in 2016; Modi Govt finally releases data, available at URL: https://www.businesstoday.in/sectors/agriculture/farmer-suicide-ncrb-finally-releases-data-11000-deaths-in-2016-maharashtra-tops-the-list/story/389497.html

again agriculture production. The debt cycle increases several fold year by year. "Loan recovery processes may be initiated, and these are often unethically aggressive in nature, even bordering on the criminal" (Rao 2017).

Impact of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation

In the 1990s India initiated several economic reforms in the country that was the time when consumption of food grains per head came down from 177 kg to 155kg. The reason behind unprecedented fall in the food grain absorption in last five years that shows increased rate of people living with hunger especially in rural area. The report at the same time not only disclosed about the people living with hunger was only increased but starvation, farmer suicide also increased at surprised rate.

Of late, the issue of farmer's suicide was not highlighted before liberalisation policy initiated in India. Whatever approaches made under the five-year plan to improve irrigation and agriculture techniques were not succeeded in all states as it was required. With the advent of the green revolution, modern methods of cultivation, primarily use of machinery, high-yielding varieties of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides were emphasised. This strategy led to increase in agricultural productivity but had probably "unintended" consequences. Almost in all the states irrigation techniques changed as farmers have to result more in lower expense to compete foreign product. The changed pattern of land holdings and cropping pattern made to shift from light to cash crops, liberalisation policies which pushed Indian agriculture into the global markets without a level playing field, growing cost of cultivation, uncertainty of crop output, lack of profitable prices, indebtedness, neglect of agriculture by the government and its agencies, decline of public investment, individualisation of agricultural operations, so on and so forth. This constitutes the vicious cycle in which farmer is trapped in. Government provided subsidies and advance technique for irrigation to the Indian farmers but those subsidies is quite lower compare to the foreign countries. Foreign government provided high subsidies on agriculture product, seed, fertilizer, even export subsidies so their product can reach in other countries. Due to that foreign agriculture product were cheaper compare to Indian. Indian government not only destroyed Indian

agriculture but also failed to provide such market in which farmers can sell their wheat, rice, pulse, fruits, vegetable, etc. at fair price.

The advance technology for irrigation of a single crop made competition and pressure in the market. Now, a farmer had to draw more and more credit to plough the land. In addition, lack of remunerative prices would further intensify the trouble. The uncertainty of crop yield and fluctuation in prices constituted distress to the farmers which resulting suicide.

Government Policies and their response on Farmers Suicide

Writ petitions file through Public Interest Litigation, under Constitution of India-Article 32, which questioned the validity of Section 21A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. The aforesaid section 21A was introduced into the Banking Regulation Act under Banking Laws (Amendment) Act of 1983 with came into effect from 15.2.1984. Section 21A of the Banking Regulation Act mentioned that:

21A. Rates of interest charged by banking companies not to be subject to scrutiny by courts

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Usurious Loans Act, 1918 (10 of 1918), or any other law relating to indebtedness in force in any State, a transaction between a banking company and its debtor shall not be reopened

It is easy to notice that Section 21A limitedness the activity of courts on debt in between a banking company and their debtor, including the excessive rate of interest was fixed/charged by the banking company with respect to loan. However, the section keeps away State legislation on indebtedness issue, it also declares that there will be no such loan transaction issue will reopen by the court on the ground of charging of excessive rate of interest.

In response to the petition filed on the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture on 2006-2007 consecutive year that Section 21A should be abolished, as it affects rural indebtedness. The Standing Committees Report stated that:

The Committee feels that the worst exploitation of farmers is through the adverse credit policies of the financial institutions which compel farmers to starve under the burden of loans and commit suicides. The Committee finds that in 1918, the British passed the Usurious Loans Act which provided that no farmer could be charged a rate of interest higher than the authorised rate which at that time was 5.5 per cent, and if charged, the case could be re-opened in court and the entire account re-settled. Moreover, the total amount of interest could not be higher than the original capital. But in 1949, the Banking Regulation Act was passed which made a special provision under Section 21 (A) saying that these will not apply to banking companies including cooperative banks.

In view of the plight of farmers due to heavy burden of credits, the Committee recommend that section 21 (A) of the Banking Regulation Act should be scrapped. All out concerted efforts should be made to bring down the rate of interest on Farm Credit to the level of 5.5% simple interest, as it used to be in the early 20th century. In case of cooperatives, transaction cost/margin at each layer must be reduced as the length of chain, from RBI to NABARD to State-District and Cooperative Societies at village level and Regional Rural Banks, is very big. Eventually, the farmer has to take the burden of all these middlemen/lending agencies. The Committee, therefore, recommends to shorten this chain, so that the eventual creditor is directly linked to the borrower. The Committee further desire the Government to ensure that in no case, the interest should be higher than the original capital and charging of compound rate of interest should be absolutely prohibited so that exploitation of farmers by financial institutions is minimized.

Reply of the Government

The Government in their action taken reply have stated that in order to bring down rate of interest on farm loans it has been announced in the Union Budget for the year 2006-07 that effective from Kharif 2006-07, farmers would receive crop loans upto a principal amount of Rs. 3 lakhs

at 7% rate of interest and the Government of India would provide necessary interest subvention for this purpose. Crop loans to farmers are generally made available through Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) which are valid for 3 years. As incentive for good performance, credit limits under KCC could be enhanced to take care of increase in costs, change in cropping pattern etc. Banks have been advised by RBI that total interest debited to an account should not exceed the principal amount in respect of short-term loans advanced to small and marginal farmers. As per the extant RBI instructions, banks are not allowed to compound interest on current dues of crop loans and term loans in respect of direct agricultural advances granted to farmers. If such loans become overdue banks have been advised that where the default is due to genuine reasons, they should extend the period of loan or reschedule the instalments under term loans. Once such a relief has been extended the over dues become current dues and hence banks should not compound interest thereon. In case of long duration crops, interest is recovered only annually.

Comments of the Committee

The Committee are dismayed to know that the Department has not paid any heed to the recommendation of the Committee to scrap Section 21 (A) of Banking Regulation Act, 1949 which hinders the provision of Usurious Loans Act, 1918 under which it was, inter alia, provided that the total amount of interest on a loan taken by a farmer could not be higher than the original capital. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that Section 21 (A) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 should be deleted so as to ensure that no Bank charges interest more than the original capital, irrespective of the fact, whether it is a short term loan or long term loan, from small and marginal farmers.

> Moreover, the issue of cutting the costs/margin at each layer of cooperative has also not been addressed. The Committee, therefore, reiterates their earlier recommendation to shorten the chain of cooperative loan institutions and directly link the eventual creditor to the borrowers.[3]

[3]Singh, Pramanand (2006), Farmer Suicide, Journal of Indian Law Institute (JILI)/JILI/Volume 48/2006/F3_07_2006

With reference to Section 21A, petitioners highlighted that the total 256,913 farmers has committed suicide in India between 1995 to 2010, most of the suicide is directly linked to, usurious rates of interest being charged by banks, in which court not interfered.

A 40-year-old farmer Geetam Singh, resident of Ghaghpura village of Fatehabad block in Agra shows his willingness to sell his kidney to pay the bank debt. He also stated that, he was not been able to earn profit since last three year, which increased the loan amount of Rs 20 lakh from the government and private lenders. Geetam said that if the government waives off bank interest of pending loan, he will work hard to pay principle amount. He also applied for the benefit of state government scheme of Rs 1 lakh crop loan waiver but did not received.[4]

In Karnataka due to loss in flood, Bank files a case against the farmer for not returning the loan amount. Karnataka deputy commissioner SB in Bommanhalli told to media that he has asked the concerned bank to immediately revoke the arrest warrant issued against the farmer through the court as farmers were eligible for the loan waiver scheme. He also stated that.

"The farmers are facing lot of problem due to floods. The Chief Minister himself instructed that not a single farmer should be harassed or face hurdles. I had meeting with all the bankers. Strict action will be taken against the banks who issue notices or arrest warrants to farmers."[5]

The farmer should be free from the bonds of debt incurred due to natural causes such as flood, drought, pest/locust attack. However, there is no provision regarding that. Moreover, the upward spike of suicides still continues in spite of the fact that the central and state government has announced various relief measures such as Debt Relief Commission in

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[4]lavania, Deepak (2019),Agra district administration assures help to debt-ridden farmer, available at URL:https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/dist-admin-assures-help-to-debt-ridden-farmer/articleshow/70865423.cms

[5]Rajput, Kishan (2019), Karnataka: Debt-ridden farmer who lost everything in floods faces arrest warrant; DC asks bank to revoke it, available at URL:https://timesofindia. india times.com/city/hubballi/karnataka-debt-ridden-farmer-who-lost-everything-in-floods-faces-arrest-warrant/articleshow/71127146.cms

2006. The next year after the announcement, around 16372 farmers including 2369 women farmers killed themselves across the country, which accounted for 14.4 percent of the total suicides reported in 2007.[6]

The angst among small scale farmers has seen in rural areas on the issues such as degraded soils, debt traps, pest attacks, declining yields, dependence on chemical inputs, speculative cash cropping. Most of the farmers claim that agriculture game is almost over, that it is all gone, or "*elaam poyi*," as they say in Malayalam.[7] However not all farmers shared these thoughts "futureless-ness" but few of them are enthusiastically and hopeful, who were very well aware of the environmental and human costs of capitalist farming that is not affordable for all. Thus, they have found their own way to drop all these destructive techniques and were looking at a future of abundance, independence, and sovereignty that open the way for Zero Budget Natural Farming.

Subhash Palekar in his most of the lecture to the farmers encourage them to go for 'Zero Budget pillar' and 'Zero Budget Farming'. He also gives confidence to the farmers that not buying any farming inputs and food from the market and thus to increase autonomy from market forces. "We do not take a single Paisa to the market," you repeated over and over again at the workshop.

He stated that

> I remember you shouting at exploitative "input industries," which you identify as a prime cause of debts and ultimately suicide. You explained how these external inputs hinge on an erroneous (chemical) theory of soil fertility that sees soil as inert and deficient matter. You instead taught us to conceive of soil as Annapurna (mother earth) a living part of what you like to call "nature" and an abundant "ocean of nutrients." As a consequence, you claim that everything a farmer needs for building soil fertility can be found on the farm if the farmers keep a native Zebu

[6]Mohanakumar, S. (2010), Agrarian Crisis and National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector, Social Scientist, Vol. 38, No. 5/6 (May-June), pp. 62-75

[7]Munster, Daniel (2014), A Letter to Subhash Palekar, Natural Farmer, RCC Perspectives, No. 6, Beyond Doom and Gloom: An Exploration through Letters, pp. 23-26

> cow. Cutting ties with the market also involves a return to the cultivation of food crops (baksha krishi) rather than cash-crops that have dominated smallholder cultivation.[8]

In the wake of farmers suicide crisis after introducing neo liberal policy in 1991 it mostly affected the unorganised sector. Thus, the Government of India constituted the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) in September 2004. The NCEUS was mandated mainly to review and suggest policy measure to the Government on outcome of the production. NCEUS suggested how to improve production, productivity and employment in the unorganised sector especially for small farmers. The NCEUS covered agriculture, provided a extended definition of enterprises to unorganised sector. It also accesses the problem, reason of stagnation and distress to suggest a inclusive policy for the revival of the sector. Regarding that, the NCEUS submitted a report titled "*A Special Programme for Marginal and Small Farmers"* to the then Prime Minister Manmohan Sing in 2008. In the submitted report, the NCEUS chairman stated in unambiguous terms that:

The Commission has now examined in detail the conditions of work and livelihood of marginal and small farmers and prepared a report..... The Commission has also examined the various issues confronting these farmers including their low access to services, low value realisa tion, and low level of diversification, leading to a deficit in incomes over expenditure. The commission is of the view that the situation requires immediate corrective measures and the problems confronting Marginal and Small Farmers at this juncture require a fresh and focused approach. We have accordingly recommended a Special Programme for Marginal and Small Farmers, which if implemented, will, in our view substantially improve the condition of this vast segment. We have held extensive discussions on this with the officers in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Minister of Agriculture himself.

The NCEUS's also made a decision to cover marginal and small farmers with extend the definition of Enterprises in the unorganised sector. In 2005,

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[8]Ibid, (Mohanakumar 2010)

around 394.90 million workforces engaged in unorganized sector in which agriculture sector has contributed 252.80 million or 64 percent. Agriculture workforce includes agricultural labourers which are around 89 million, 74.60 million are marginal farmers and 39.90 million are small farmers. These three categories constitute 80.50 percent of the total workforce in the agricultural sector.[9]

Karnataka is the second worst State for such farmer suicides in the country in 2013 was around 1,403 and 321 in 2014. Similarly, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana), Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are the "Big 5" States of farmer suicides claimed two-thirds of all such suicides. These Big 5 States recorded well over 90 per cent of all farmers' suicides in 2014.

Indebtedness and Moneylenders

In between 1990- 91 and 2000-01, cost of production increase by 114.4 per cent however output prices only rose by 100.2 per cent. In agriculture most of the worst affected were cotton and oilseeds. Whereas the institutional credit for agriculture was expanded after the nationalisation of bank, it increases from Rs 1,865 crore was in 1971-72 to rose to Rs 1,80,486 crore in 2005-06 and to Rs 2,03,296 crore in 2006-07. However, the needs for the credit in agriculture never met their criteria what was required from the farmer's side. They were not been able to borrow from the formal institutional system which was introduces for them. As the National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) made a 'Situation Assessment Survey of Farmers' in 2003. In that survey it found that only 48.6 percent of farmer households were indebted, of which only 57.7 per cent were indebted through institutional agencies, in other words, that percentage in only 28.04 per cent. Most of the financial exclusion were found in rural areas. As per the Rural Finance Access Survey (RFAS) survey conducted in 2003 by the World Bank and the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NGAER) in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Andhra Pradesh (AP) had found parallel results. Uttar Pradesh has only

[9]Ibid.

19.9 percent and Andhra Pradesh with 24 percent rural households were indebted to formal institutions. The dramatic figure revealed through the result of these surveys that 87.03 percent of farmer's household mostly marginal farmers and 69.21 percent of the small-scale farmers had not taken loans from the formal institutional agencies.[10]

The rural economy is in a shambles like situation, say farmer leaders and rural economy experts, who have noticed that the declining farm credit from institutionalised players and restrictions on the operations of cooperative banks may throw farmers at the mercy of private money lenders.[11]

Shreekant Sambrani, former founder director, Institute of Rural Management, Anand said that "The stranglehold of moneylenders and traders is going to increase. The agricultural credit scenario will worsen in the short term and possibly also in the medium term," Even private money lenders noticed decline in business due to shortage of cash. One of registered (having licenced to do this) money lender, Gopal Khandelwal from Vidarbha said his business has declined by 50% since demonetisation. The number of people getting their mortgaged properties released by repaying loans has also gone down by 50%. "Many farmers are not willing to accept cheque payment for their kharif harvest fearing that if they deposit the cheque in the bank then the bank will take back the loan amount. As they have not sold their produce, they are unable to release their mortgaged properties,"[12]

It is extremely disturbing that even after several decades of bank nationalization, most of credits on agriculture from farmer's household were less than that form the moneylenders. It is worth looking, at why the professional moneylenders are a popular choice of the Indian farmers for raising credit. Are the farmers being not aware about the high rate of interest

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[10]Path, Balasaheb Vikhe (2008), Agricultural Indebtedness: Crisis and Revival, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 43, No. 5 (Feb. 2 - 8), pp. 47-52

[11]Bhosale, Jayasgree (2016), Weak bank support may drive farmers to web of traders, private moneylenders, available at URL: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/weak-bank-support-may-drive-farmers-to-web-of-traders-private-moneylenders/article show/55823258.cms?from=mdr

[12]Ibid.

and interlinked transactions where they have to sell their crop to the lender and at the same time buy inputs from them. Balasaheb Vikhe stated that "besides the problem of exclusion, the lack of flexibility, insistence on collaterals and non- availability of appropriate products are the real problems of institutional credit. Further, more often than not the real cost of loans from banks works out more or less equal to the rate of interest charged by the informal agencies".[13] There are several cases in which farmers were duped by the agents on loans, they have not applied but due to mortgage papers they received the notice from bank to pay it. In few other cases, farmers were applied when they were alive, the never receive any allocation of loan but the letter came from bank to pay it when they died.

In 2008 Union government announced around 60,000 crore loan waiver for small scale farmers, those who were borrowed money from the banks, but agriculture experts expressed that the efficacy of the scheme is badly diluted because it leaves out those borrowing from moneylenders. One of the expert S. Parasuraman of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, said "moneylenders are now an inextricable part of the rural economy, So much so the bank has become secondary, or even redundant, for a small farmer". Just one in every seven marginal farmers has access to institutional credit, says a study on agricultural indebtedness. Nabard chairman UC Sarangi mentioned that "about 38% of these loans carry interest rates of 30% or more, while another 36% cost anywhere between 20% and 25%. The implications are predictable - impoverishment, distress migration and, sometimes, suicide". Similarly, in October, 2009, the study constituted by Sarangi committee mentioned how "all categories of farmers, more particularly small and marginal farmers, tenant farmers, sharecroppers and oral lessees" could be brought within the institutional credit fold in order to reduce their dependence on informal credit sources".[14]

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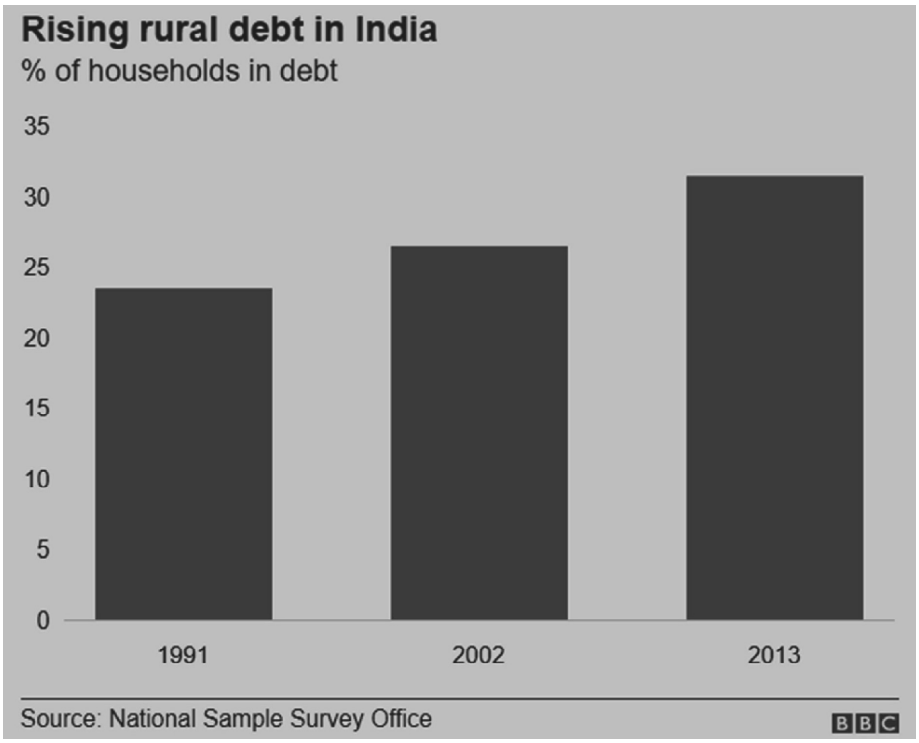
[13]Path, Balasaheb Vikhe (2008), Agricultural Indebtedness: Crisis and Revival, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 43, No. 5 (Feb. 2 - 8), pp. 47-52

[14]The Economic Times (2010), Farm credit surges, so does moneylenders' hegemony, available at URL: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/wealth/personal-finance-news/farm-credit-surges-so-does-moneylenders-hegemony/articleshow/6533889.cms?from=mdr

Legally, almost half of the India's farmer's families are in debt which accounted nearly 100 million. In which 30 percent of borrowings is from private moneylenders, while farmers' groups expressed that the ratio is many times higher than the government claim.[15] However, rural credit and indebtedness is far from being a simplistic usurious lender-farmer spiral. Even though 1.1 billion 60% of India's people are supported through farming, but it contributes only one-fifth of GDP and accounts for only around 15% of bank credit. Marginal farmers hardly get formal credit because they almost never have any collateral. Other farmers are often underfinanced by banks, forcing them to turn to private lenders. One of the farmers Uike said that "I have nothing left to mortgage to banks, so they will not give me credit, "Where can I go then?"[16]



[15]Mukherjee, Krittivas (2008), Moneylenders are the only hope for poor Indian farmers, available at URL: https://www.livemint.com/Politics/b8yRJ1b7rqQoJCic8vTdnL/Moneylenders-are-the-only-hope-for-poor-Indian-farmers.html

Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said that rather than giving loan waivers to the farmers, India needs to focus on resolution why farmers are in distress and taking loan which not only ending the life of farmers but also killing the credit culture. He said that "first we need to worry about why people are so distressed and angry. There is a lot of agriculture distress. I personally believe that farm loan waivers are not the answers. But there are other answers." Giving statement in this regard is mostly related to the election as most of the politician during their election propaganda they promised to waive the loan of farmers.[17]

Pesticide

"Every year, there are about 10,000 reported cases of pesticide poisoning in India. Chandra Bhushan, deputy director general of Delhi non-profit Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) said that the agriculture ministry and state agricultural departments are mainly responsible for unsafe sell and use of pesticides. He said the "Deaths and illnesses due to pesticides can be avoided if we can urgently fix some of the crucial gaps in regulations and improve enforcement." A survey conducted by the CSE in 2005 on Punjab farmers, it found that toxic residues of various pesticides in farmers blood. Devanand Pawar, convenor of Shetkari Nyaya Hakka Andolan Samiti, a farmer's rights association based in Maharashtra, blamed government for pesticide poisoning related cases and death in Vidarbha region. As most of the farmers are using excessive pesticides to protect their cotton crop from pink bollworm infection and inhaled while spraying. All these are happening because there is no proper advocacy or awareness programme is run by the agriculture department to train/teach farmers how to use pesticides safely. The government should also ensure that their no illegal sale banned pesticides and also farmers were using protective measures while spraying pesticides.[18]

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[16]Ibid

[17]The Economic Times (2019), Farm loan waivers kill credit culture, says Raghuram Rajan, available at URL: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/farm-loan-waivers-kill-credit-culture-says-raghuram-rajan/articleshow/68585854.cms?from=mdr

[18]Taneja, Sonam (2017), Why India Continues to Use Lethal Pesticide, available at URL: https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/agriculture/bhavantar-yojna-mp-farmers-refuse-to-sign-up-for-2nd-round-59864

There are several initiatives is introduced to reduce the use of chemicals in pesticides. One the one hand pesticides is expensive as well is harmful for health. The department of biotechnology (DBT) was set up in 1986 for the purpose to develop such technology within the coordination of biology. The major contribution of DBT's to the agriculture is to develop and improve the nutritional quality of agriculture crop using genetic engineering. There are several transgenic plants produce and field-tested through the DBT such as tobacco, cotton, rice and oil, mustard. The DBT has also formed bio-pesticides for pest management and bio-fertilisers to promote organic farming and reduce the dependence on agrochemicals.

However, there are large number of chemicals are used for making pesticides which is already banned in many countries. In 2017, around 35 farmers in Vidarbha region died in just four months due to pesticide poisoning. Most of the farmers were working in cotton and soybean fields; they inhaled the pesticides while spraying on crops. In another district of Yavatmal, 18 farmers died in four months. So many cases also noticed in Nagpur, Akola and Amravati districts.

B S Yelke, head of the medicine department at Shri Vasantrao Naik Government Medical College in Yavatmal, said that around 479 poisoning cases have been referred to the hospital in five months. The common symptom of poisoning cases is related to giddiness, vomiting, loose motions, and irritation, watering of the eyes and blurred vision. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis ordered a probe by Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the deaths and following incidents. The Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA), a nationwide network of farmers' organisations, released its fact-finding report and blamed that "toxic pesticides like monocrotophos, oxydemetonmethyl, acephate, profenofos, fipronil, imidacloprid and cypermethrin used in different combinations for the deaths".

Immediately after the fact finding reports was prepared by the ASHA organization members on visiting Kalamb and Aarni blocks of Yavatmal district, the state government banned five pesticides—formulations of acephate, monocrotophos, diafenthiuron, profenofos and cypermethrin,

and fipronil and imidacloprid—for 60 days in Yavatmal, Akola, Amravati and neighbouring Buldhana and Washim (based on DowntoEarth report in 2017).

The National Crime Records Bureau released the report which shows that in 2015, around 7,060 people in the country died due to accidental pesticide poisoning. In 2013, Dhar mashati Gandaman village in Bihar's Saran district, 23 children died in after consuming mid-day meal tainted with traces of monocrotophos. Similarly, earlier reported by the four organization Toxics Link, Sarvodaya Youth Organisation, the Centre for Resource Education and Community Health Cell on death related to spraying pesticide Warangal district of Telangana. Death related to intoxicated pesticides were considered as casual event in the state.

Conclusion

Leading journalist and expert on agrarian crisis P. Sainath said that "one farmer in every 30 minutes committing suicide in India," over 300,000 farmers committed suicide in India in between 1995- 2015. Jyotika Sood in a Magazine 'DownToEarth' mentioned that, India's is deepening in farm crisis in which 76 percent of farmers want to give up farming. These data is compiled based on the survey conducted by The Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) on behalf of 5,000 farm households across 17 states. Reason behind the suicide of farmers is mainly related to indebtedness which includes various reasons such as crops were destroyed because of unseasonal rains, drought, floods and pest attack, minimum support price is not sufficient, not available market to sell product, expensive farming, lack of government policies to help farmers at ground level. This paper mainly focuses the small scale and marginal farmers; it has raised the question as well why their voices were not accessible to the government. Why government rather than making solution giving loan waivers benefits to few farmers. Now the farmers in highly politicized, rather than working on agrarian distress and agriculture crisis making contradictory comment in front of media about farmer's conditions, they were responsible for themselves not government.

As per the Census 2001, report explored that 'Farmers have decreased, farm labourers increased. This is noticing at alarm rate on the agrarian crisis. The number of farmers have decreased by 8.6 million in past decade. The other fact is that more than 37 million people have engaged to farm labour in last decade.[19] Population census 2001, noticed that male population of agricultural labourers increase by 44 per, while females population has increased by 24.5 per cent. However, 2011 census stated that 263 million are engaged in the agriculture sector, in which over half of them are now agricultural labourers, this trend has been seen for the first time in the last 40 years.

Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation welcomed by the Indian government in 1990s, we can trace than most the engagement were mainly in agriculture sector, however the green revolution was not placed similar in all the states but the incident about farmer suicide were not in centre arena. But soon after the liberalization in 1990s the policies made by the government for the farmers open the way for capitalisation in agriculture. Except farmers all public and private sector see agriculture as most of the highly priorities business. Government pulled their blessing hand from the agriculture policies. Whatever reforms were made to benefit the farmers was either benefitted government or the private sector. Year by year income decreased from the farming and the cultivation cost increased. Farmers were totally dependent on the moneylenders for their farming. Most of the farmers became land less due to high debt lenders occupied their farmland. In the beginning they have to struggle for farming, after cultivation again they have to struggle to sell it. Farmers are totally dependent to the mercy of private dealers for their control over seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, choice of their crop, or to sell their crop, everywhere brokers are taking huge commission from them. Public crop marketing services is totally declined as private sector expanded their control in agriculture product and market. Price of agriculture is imposed by the private vendors and traders. Farmers

[19]Sood, Jyotika (2015), Farmers have decreased, farm labourers increased: census report, available at URL: https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/farmers-have-decreased-farm-labourers-increased-census-report—40940

were unable to sell their crop without broker, if they will go through the government, they have to sell their product less than their cultivation cost because minimum support fixed by the government is too less. Due to continuity of selling crop less than the cost of production, pulled them in high indebtedness. All this happened is been going on for a long period, when public sector were taking back their hand from agriculture area. The story of agrarian distress is perhaps a little more complex and complicated than what we see it.

Indian governments seen that high indebtedness indicated stagnation, economic decline and problems in repayment. Indebtedness is a stage when an individual in surrounded with the burden of debt, offsets the process of credit recycling, impedes everything to reproduce crop and left only one option to go into an intractable vicious debt trap. To pay the debt either farmer borrows money from elsewhere or to end the life. In most of the cases in small and marginal farmer ended their life in fear that they lose their respect in the society. However, there are other cases also in which their relative humiliates them to commit suicide.

There was a discussion about the agriculture growth after independence; the discussion about agriculture has brought back to the public arena again but not for agriculture growth but when spurt in suicides rates by farmers were noticed in different parts of the country. Whatever discussion today we are having about agriculture, the same we have done in our past at the time of Indian independence. However, the difference in the opinion and views are changed at this time academics, politician, human rights experts, policy makers, and activists is not talking in the manner as they have done after independence. After independence, agriculture was one of the important issues, farmers considered as hard working, food givers, selfless and symbol of pride India. Present discussion has changed completely farmers, one of the remarks made by the BJP MP Sanjay Dhotre on farmer's suicide in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, "if they are incapable of or cannot afford farming. Let these farmers fend for themselves. If crops fail, they will figure out what to do. And if they are dying, let them die," the parliamentarian from Akola. In another remarks BJP MP from Mumbai,

Gopal Shetty has said that it has become a "fashion" for farmers to commit suicides. In present political leaders doing nothing to help them out but making controversial statement. These types of remarks break them from inside. Helpless farmers some time in protest overthrow their crop in road or in market if they did not receive the cost of their production. Another such movement was noticed in 2015 when large number of farmers gathered at India's capital Delhi for demanding just one agenda "reverse the grave Indian agrarian crisis".

Naresh Tikait chairperson of Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) said that millions of food givers are being forced to quit agriculture job and to leave their villages. Most of the food producers are searching other job in which they can earn certain fix amount due to that they are migrating to urban areas. The circumstances are created in the agriculture sector only a small number of farmers will be left in the country in near future. Indian agriculture sector is controlled by a handful of private corporations which is regularly exploiting farmers and agriculture labourers in order to increase their profits. He said that

"Is this a sensible route in an age of a deep environmental crisis, when thousands are dying of hunger and need a secure livelihood? If the Indian government continues to promote unharnessed industrialization and elite consumerism, where will the water and electricity come from for such large industrial projects and what will be the impact on Nature and the poor?" …. The leader lashed out at the Indian government's current obsession with liberalisation and said the reforms were a dangerous trend. "Agriculture has been turned into a losing profession. Our lands, the primary resource for our livelihoods, are being grabbed for private non-agricultural purpose; there is no assured income for farmers; cost of cultivation is increasing; farm debts are rising; prices don't cover cost of production; and markets are being opened up to favor big international agribusiness through FDI in retail and Free Trade Agreements. Such orchestrated efforts by the government are displacing the agrarian masses; millions of "Anna

daatas" are being forced to either commit suicide or abandon agriculture and leave the villages in search of insecure, unavailable jobs,"[20]

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